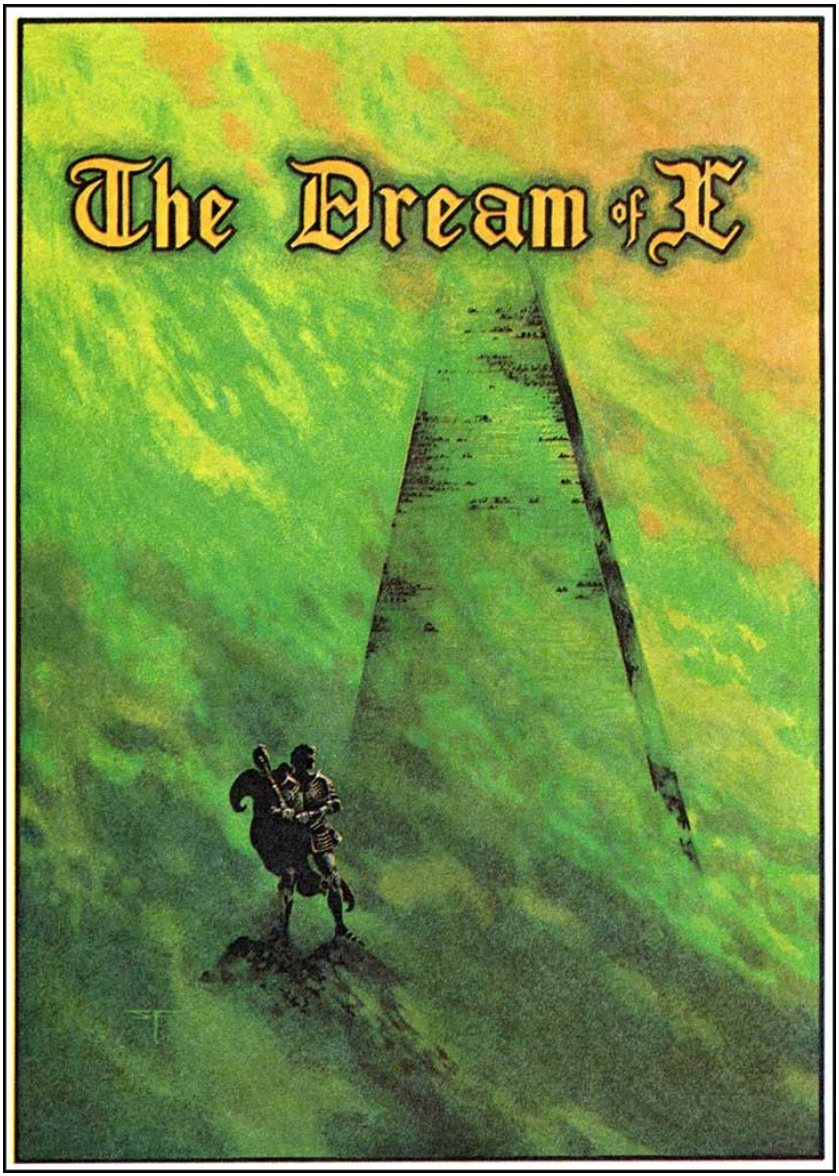
THE DREAM OF X

by WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON


The Dream of E

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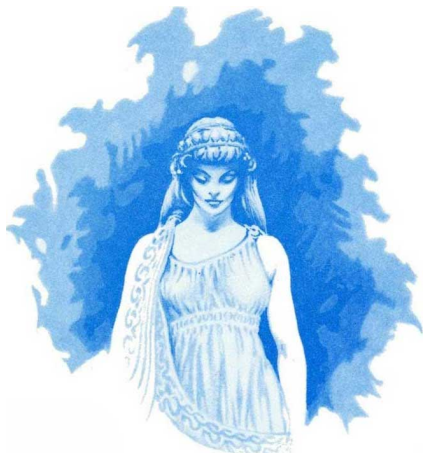
by WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON

Introduction
by Sam Moskowitz

Illustrated by Stephen Fabian



DONALD M. GRANT, PUBLISHER
WEST KENSINGTON, RHODE ISLAND
1977

THE DREAM OF X

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON

THE DREAM OF X is one of those lost books of science-fantasy – forgotten for more than fifty years until the incredible researches of Sam Moskowitz recalled it to the light of day. THE DREAM OF X is a unique book; it is a carefully rewritten, revised, and reorganized version of William Hope Hodgson's massive, greatest work, THE NIGHT LAND.

And it is a remarkable book, designated by the author as the "rescued fragments" recovered from the ashes of a fire in the ancient house of the narrator. Set in the dim future of the world, The Last Redoubt of civilization sustains itself against the eternal siege of other dimensional malignities. Here is an atmosphere of forboding evil that is rarely – if ever – equalled in the annals of weird fiction. As a complement to this masterful epic, artist Stephen E. Fabian has prepared 14 superb full-color plates, illustrated endleaves in full color, and a variety of designs and devices. The result is an incredible combination of art and fiction.

Introduction by Sam Moskowitz.

DONALD M. GRANT, PUBLISHER
West Kingston, Rhode Island 02892

THE DREAM OF X
by William Hope Hodgson

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Illustrations

Color Plates

The North-West Watcher
The South-East Watcher
The Watcher of the South
The South-West Watcher
The Watcher of the North East
The Garden of Silence
The Lesser Redoubt
Naani at the fire-hole
I took her into mine arms
The House of Silence
The Night Hounds
X battles the Beast Men
I lifted Mine Own Maid into mine arms

Return to the Night Land
An Introduction

by SAM MOSKOWITZ

THE NIGHT LAND is William Hope Hodgson's quintessential work of fantastic imagination.

Although it is science fiction, Hodgson, in his evocation of The Last Redoubt of human civilization, sustaining itself against perpetual siege by otherdimensional malignity, has created a mood of soul-threatening damnation that transcends all earlier works of satanism, witchcraft, werewolves and vampires combined.

THE NIGHT LAND was published simultaneously in England by Everleigh Nash and G. Bell & Son in 1912. In that era, a book published in England by a British author could not be copyrighted in the United States unless typeset and printing were performed by an American shop. Furthermore, the author was required to sign an affidavit swearing to the truth of compliance.

Hodgson was well-versed in copyright procedure, he had been selling short stories in the United States from a point early in his career. He saw the need to protect THE NIGHT LAND in this country, and when all attempts by his American agent, R. Harold Paget of the Paget Literary Agency, New York, had failed, he found himself faced with a dilemna.

THE NIGHT LAND was a massive book. Clearly, any attempt to finance an American printing of a volume of that size was far beyond the author's limited resources. Hodgson solved his problem in a unique and exciting manner. The 200,000-word novel was deleted, rewritten, revised and reorganized; finally condensed to 20,000 words — one tenth of its original length. He titled this new, compact version of THE NIGHT LAND, "The Dream of X," designating it as the "rescued fragments" recovered from the ashes of a fire in the ancient house of the narrator.

The result is a truly remarkable achievement. Instead of handing us a synopsis, Hodgson, in this shortened version of his masterpiece, has retained the finest elements of the original book and melded them so superbly that if this were the only form ever to have appeared, it would

have been critically acclaimed.

Hodgson then paid his agent to have it published for him in the United States and the copyright properly registered. The book was 84 pages in total, 7¼ inches high by 4¾ inches wide, and titled POEMS and THE DREAM OF X by William Hope Hodgson, as published by R. Harold Paget, New York, 1912. The volume was paper-covered and in the copyright form the price was put at 50 cents. It contained, in addition to "The Dream of X," 13 poems, most of them previously unpublished. It also contained the long novelette titled "Mutiny," shortened from "Prentices' Mutiny," a three-part serial which originally ran in the February, March and April 1912 issues of The Wide World Magazine.

It is entirely possible that this book was never put on sale. A little paper book by an unknown author, with the word "Poems" most prominent in its title would have made it a commercial absurdity. What seems likely is that it was set in type, some good proofs run off (there were no illustrations), and these bound in paper covers and sent to The Library of Congress for registration. The actual number of copies produced is not known, but reason indicates it must have been very small. Such a procedure would have put the entire project within the financial means of Hodgson. Since he was not producing an edition, he was not faced with paper, printing and binding costs. All he would have paid for, actually, was the typesetting. With the linotype slugs remelted, it is quite conceivable that the entire investment might have been accomplished for somewhere in the vicinity of $100 to $125. In 1912 Hodgson made at least $600 to $700. There was no income tax, and $15 to $20 a week was adequate to live on.

To assuage the curiosity of the collector, the titles of the poems included in the original volume are: "I Have Borne My Lord a Son," "Bring Out Your Dead," "I Come Again," "The Song of the Great Bull Whale" (The Grand Magazine, March, 1912), "Speak Well of the Dead," "Little Garments," "The Sobbing of the Freshwater" (The London Magazine, May, 1912), "O Parent Sea," "Listening," "My Babe, My Babe," "The Night Wind," and "Grey Seas Are Dreaming of My Death" (later published in his book of poems THE CALLING OF THE SEA, Selwyn & Blount, London, 1920).

It should again be emphasized that every word of revision, addition, deletion and reorganization in "The Dream of X," without exception, was made by William Hope Hodgson. No changes of any sort were made by me or by the publisher. The illustrations by Stephen Fabian reflect that fine

artist's immense admiration for this work. They are expressed with a graphic eloquence that requires no further testimonial.

The Dream of X

Edited by
William Hope Hodgson

(Note: — The charred fragments of “The Dream of X” were discovered in an iron box, after the burning of his ancient country residence at Z., where he had lived many years alone after the death of his wife, the “Mirdath” mentioned in the following pages. Through these fragments, which I as Editor have striven to piece and unify into a comprehensible “whole,” we get glimpses of a stupendous Dream of the Future of this World, and of X’s imagined or real meeting with his wife again in that far off age, with a new name and a new body; but possessed of the olden soul of the woman whom he had plainly loved so madly.)

The Preface Appended by “X”
To His Dream

“This to be Love, that your spirit to live in a natural holiness with the Beloved, and your bodies to be a sweet and natural delight that shall be never lost of a lovely mystery. . . . And shame to be unborn, and all things to go wholesome and proper, out of an utter greatness of understanding; and the Man to be an Hero and a Child before the Woman; and the Woman to be an Holy Light of the Spirit and an Utter Companion and in the same time a glad Possession unto the Man. . . . And this doth be Human Love. . . .”

“. . . for this to be the especial glory of Love, that it doth make unto all Sweetness and Greatness, and doth be a fire burning all littleness; so that did all to have met The Beloved, then did Wantonness be dead, and there to grow Gladness and Charity, dancing in the years.”

(“And I cannot touch her face
And I cannot touch her hair
And I kneel to empty shadows
Just memories of her grace;
And her voice sings in the winds
And in the sobs of Dawn
And among the flowers at night
And from the brooks at sunrise
And from the sea at sunset. . . .
. . . . . .”)[1]

The Rescued Fragments

The Last Redoubt

The Rescued Fragments of "The Dream of X"

edited by
William Hope Hodgson

Since the time when Mirdath, my Beautiful One, died and left me lonely in this world, I have visited in my dreams those places where in the womb of the Future she and I shall come together, and part, and again come together — breaking asunder most drearly in pain, and again re-uniting after strange ages, in solemn wonder.

And some shall read and say that this was not, and some shall dispute with them; but to them all I say naught, save "Read!" And having read that which I set down, then shall one and all have looked towards Eternity with me — aye, unto its very portals. And so to my telling: —

To me, in this last time of my visions, it was not as if I dreamed; but, as it were, that I waked there into the dark, in the future of this world. And the sun had died; and for me thus newly waked into that Future, to look back upon this our Present Age, was to look back into dreams that my soul knew to be of reality; but which to those newly-seeing eyes of mine, appeared but as a far vision, strangely hallowed with peacefulness and light.

Always, it seemed to me when I awaked into the Future, into the Everlasting Night that lapped this world, that I saw near to me and girding me all about a blurred greyness. And presently this, the greyness, would clear and fade from about me, even as a dusky cloud, and I would look out upon a world of darkness, lit here and there with strange sights. And with my waking, I waked not to ignorance; but to a full knowledge of those things which lit the Night Land; even as a man wakes from sleep each morning, and knows immediately he wakes, the names and knowledge of the Time which has bred him, and in which he lives. And the same while a knowledge I had, as it were sub-conscious, of this Present — this early life, which now I live so utterly alone.

In my earliest knowledge of that place, I was a youth, and my memory tells me that when first I waked, or came, as it might be said, to myself, I stood in one of the embrasures of the Last Redoubt — that great Pyramid of grey metal which held the last millions of this world from the Powers of the Slayers. And so full am I of the knowledge of that Place, that scarce can I believe that none here know; and because I have such difficulty, it may be that I speak over familiarly of those things of which I know; and heed not to explain much that it is needful that I should explain to those who must read here in this our present day. For there, as I stood and looked out, I was less the man of years of this age, than the youth of that, with the natural

knowledge of that life which I had gathered by living all my seventeen years of life there; though, until that my first vision, I knew not of that other and Future existence; yet woke to it so naturally as may a man wake here in his bed to the shining of the morning sun, and know it by name, and the meaning of aught else. And yet, as I stood there in the vast embrasure, I had also knowledge of memory, of this present life of ours, deep down within me; but touched with a halo of dreams; and yet with a conscious longing for One, known even there in a half Memory as Mirdath.

As I have said, in my earliest memory, I mind that I stood in an embrasure, high up in the side of the Pyramid, and looked outwards through a queer spyglass to the North-West. Aye, full of youth and with an adventurous and yet half-fearful heart. And in my brain was, as I have told, the knowledge that had come to me in all the years of my life in the Redoubt; and yet until that moment, this Man of this Present Time, had no knowledge of that future existence; and now I stood and had suddenly the knowledge of a life already spent in that strange land, and deeper within me the misty knowings of this our present Age, and, maybe, also, of some others.

To the North-West I looked through the queer spy-glass and saw a landscape that I had looked upon and pored upon through all the years of that life, so that I knew how to name this thing and that thing, and give the very distances of each and everyone from the “Centre-Point” of the Pyramid, which was that which had neither length nor breadth, and was made of polished metal in the Room of Mathematics, where I went daily to my studies.

To the North-West I looked, and in the wide field of my glass, saw plain the bright glare of the fire from the Red Pit shine upwards against the underside of the vast chin of the North-West Watcher

The North-West Watcher

— The Watching Thing of the North-West . . . "That which hath Watched from the Beginning, and until the opening of the Gateway of Eternity" came into my thoughts, as I looked through the glass . . . the words of Aesworpth, the Ancient Poet (though incredibly future to this our time). And suddenly they seemed at fault; for I looked deep down into my being, and saw, as dreams are seen, the sunlight and splendour of this, our present Age. And I was amazed. And here I must make it clear to all that, even as I waked from this age, suddenly into that life, so must I — that youth there in the embrasure — have awakened then to the knowledge of this far-back life of ours . . . seeming to him a vision of the very beginnings of eternity in the dawn of the world. Oh! I do but dread I make it not sufficient clear that I and he were both I . . . the same soul. He of that far date seeing vaguely the life that was (that I do now live in this present age); and I of this time beholding the life that I yet shall live. How utterly strange! And yet, I do not know that I speak holy truth to say that I, in that future time, had no knowledge of this life and Age, before that awakening; for I woke to find that I was one who stood apart from the other youths, in that I had a dim knowledge — visionary, as it were, of the past, which confounded, whilst yet it angered, those who were the men of learning of that age. But this I do know, that from that time, onwards, my knowledge and assuredness of the Past was tenfold; for this my memory of that life told me. And so to further my telling. Yet before I pass onwards, one other thing is there of which I shall speak. . . . In the moment in which I waked out of that youthfulness into the assured awaredness of this life, in that moment the hunger of this my love flew to me across the ages; so that what had been but a memory-dream, grew to the pain of reality, and I knew suddenly that I lacked; and from that time onwards, I went, listening, as even now my life is spent. And so it was that I, (fresh-born in that future time), hungered, strangely for my Beautiful One; with all the strength of that new life, knowing that she had been mine, and might live again, even as I. And so, as I have said, I hungered, and found that I listened.

And now, to go back from my digression, it was as I have said, I had amazement at perceiving in memory the unknowable sunshine and splendour of this age breaking so clear through my hitherto most vague and hazy visions; so that the ignorance of Aesworpth was shouted to me by the things which now I knew. And from that time onward, for a little space, I was stunned with all that I knew and guessed and felt; and all of a long while the hunger grew for that one I had lost in the early days — she who

had sung to me in those faery days of light, that had been in verity. And the especial thoughts of that age looked back with a keen regretful wonder into the gulf of forgetfulness.

But, presently, I turned from the haze and pain of my dream-memories once more to the inconceivable mystery of the Night Land, which I viewed through the great embrasure. For on none did it ever come with weariness to look out upon all the hideous mysteries; so that old and young watched from early years to death the black monstrosity of the Night Land, which this our last refuge of humanity held at bay.

To the right of the Red Pit there lay a long, sinuous glare, which I knew as the Vale of Red Fire, and beyond that for many dreary miles the blackness of the Night Land; across which came the coldness of the light from the Plain of Blue Fire. And then, on the very borders of the Unknown Lands, there lay a range of low volcanoes, which lit up, far away in the outer darkness, the Black Hills, where shone the Seven Lights, which neither twinkled nor moved nor faltered through eternity; and of which even the great Spy Glass could make no understanding; nor had any adventurer from the Pyramid ever come back to tell us aught of them. And here let me say, that down in the Great Library of the Redoubt were the histories of all those, with their discoveries, who had ventured out into the monstrousness of the Night Land, risking not the life only, but the spirit of life.

And surely it is all so strange and wonderful to set out, that I could almost despair with the contemplation of that which I must achieve; for there is so much to tell, and so few words given to man by which he may indicate that which lies beyond his sight and the present and general knowings of Peoples.

How shall you ever know, as I know in verity, of the greatness and reality and terror of the thing that I would make clear to all; for we, with our puny span of recorded life must have great histories to tell, but the few bare details we know concerning years that are but a few thousands in all; and I must set out to you in the short pages of this my life there, a sufficiency of the life that had been, and the life that was, both within and without that mighty Pyramid, to make clear to those who may read, the truth of that which I would tell; and the histories of that great Redoubt dealt not with odd thousands of years; but with very millions; aye, away back into what they of that Age conceived to be the early days of the earth, when the sun maybe still gloomed dully in the night sky of the world. But of all that went

before, nothing, save as myths, and matters to be taken most cautiously, and believed not by men of sanity and proved wisdom. And I, . . . how shall I make all this clear to they who may read? The thing cannot be; and yet I must tell my history; for to be silent before so much wonder would be to suffer of too full a heart; and I must even ease my spirit by this my struggle to tell to all how it was with me, and how it will be. Aye, even to the memories which were the possession of that far future youth, who was indeed I, of his childhood's days, when his nurse of that Age swung him and crooned impossible lullabies of this mythical sun which, according to those future fairytales, had once passed across the blackness that now lay above the Pyramid.

Such is the monstrous futureness of this which I have seen through the body of my far-off youth.

And so back to my telling. To my right, which was to the North, there stood, very far away, the House of Silence, there upon a low hill. And in that House were many lights and no sound. And so had it been through an uncountable eternity of years. Always those steady lights, and no whisper or sound — not even such as our distance-microphones could have discovered. And the danger of this House was accounted the greatest danger of all those Lands. And round by the House of Silence, wound The Road Where The Silent Ones Walk. And concerning this Road, which passed out of the Unknown Lands, nigh by the Place of the Abhumans, where was always the green, luminous mist, nothing was known, save that it was held that, of all the works about the Mighty Pyramid, it was, alone, the one that was bred, long ages past, of healthy human toil and labour. And on this point had a thousand books, and more, been writ; and all contrary, and so to no end, as is ever the way in such matters. And as it was with The Road Where The Silent Ones Walk, so it was with all those other monstrous things. . . . whole libraries had there been made upon this and upon that; and many a thousand million mouldered into the forgotten dust of the earlier world.

The South-East Watcher

I mind me now that presently I stepped upon the central travelling roadway which spanned the one thousandth plateau of the Great Redoubt. And this lay six miles and thirty fathoms above the Plain of the Night Land, and was somewhat of a great mile, or more, across. And so, in a few minutes, I was at the South-Eastern wall, and looking out through The Great Embrasure toward the Three Silver Fire Holes, that shone before the Thing that Nods, away down, far in the South-East. Southward of this; but nearer, there rose the vast bulk of the South-East Watcher — the Watching Thing of the South-East. And to the right and to the left of the squat monster burned the Torches; maybe half-a-mile upon each side; yet sufficient light they threw to show the lumbered-forward head of the never-sleeping Brute.

To the East, as I stood there on the quietness of the Sleeping-Time of the One Thousandth Plateau, I heard a far, dreadful sound, down in the lightless East; and, presently, again, a strange, dreadful laughter, deep as a low thunder among the mountains. And because this sound came odd whiles from the Unknown Lands beyond the Valley Of the Hounds, we had named that far and never-seen Place "The Country Whence Comes The Great Laughter." And though I had heard the sound, many and oft a time, yet did I never hear it without a most strange thrilling of my heart, and a sense of my littleness, and of the utter terror which had beset the last million of the world. Yet, because I had heard the Laughter oft, I paid not over-long attention to my thoughts upon it; and when, in a little it died away into that Eastern Darkness, I turned my spy-glass upon the Giants' Pit, which lay to the South of the Giants' Kilns. And these same Kilns were tended by the giants, and the light of the Kilns was red and fitful, and threw wavering shadows and lights across the mouth of the pit; so that I saw giants crawling up out of the pit; but not proper seen, by reason of the dance of the shadows. And so, because ever there was so much to behold, I looked away, presently, to that which was plainer to be examined.

To the back of the Giants' Pit was a great, black Headland that stood vast, between the Valley of the Hounds (where lived the monstrous Night Hounds) and the Giants. And the light of the Kilns struck the brow of this black Headland; so that, constantly, I saw things peer over the edge, coming forward a little into the light of the Kilns, and drawing back swiftly into the shadows. And thus it had been ever, through the uncounted ages; so that the Headland was known as The Headland from which Strange

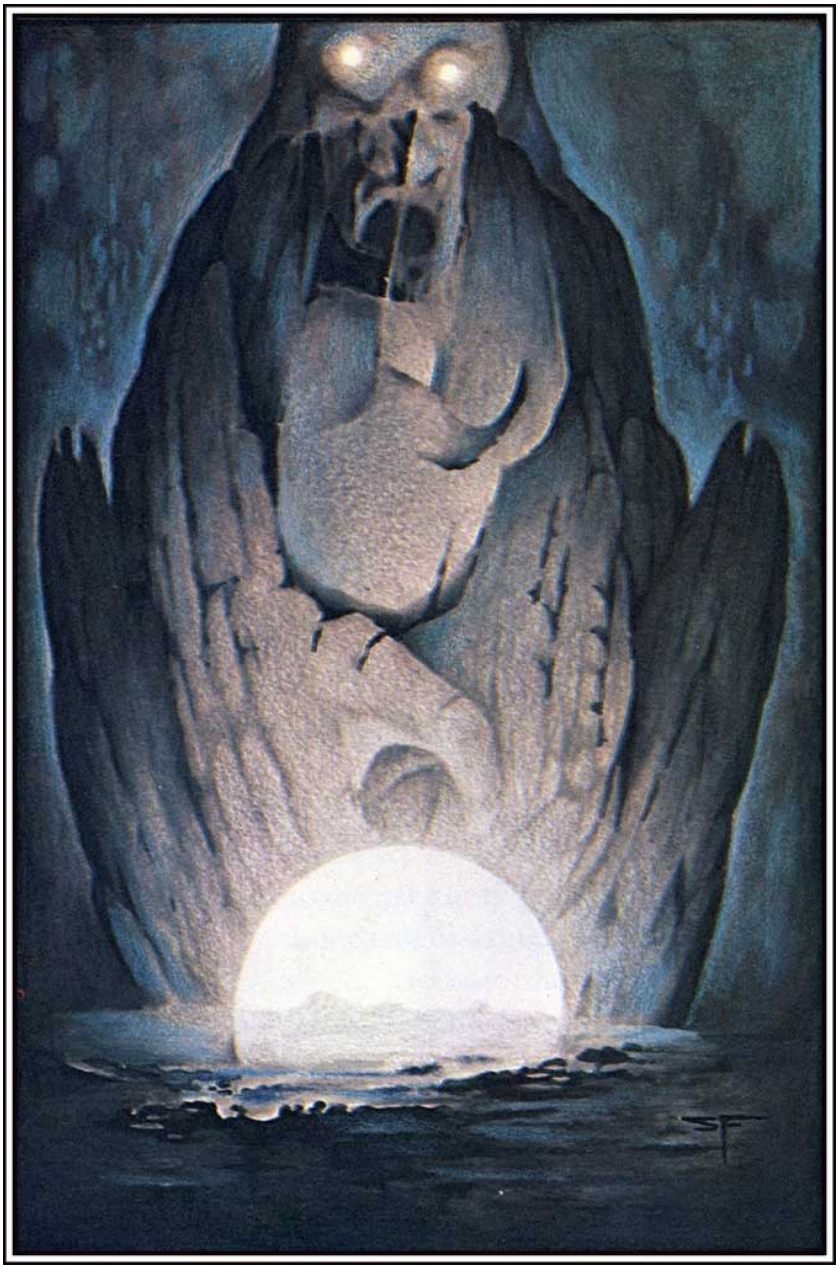
Things Peer; and thus it marked in our maps and charts of that grim world.

Before me ran The Road Where The Silent Ones Walk; and I searched it, as many a time in my earlier youth had I, with the spy-glass; for my heart was always stirred mightily by the sight of those Silent Ones. And, presently, alone in all the miles of that night-grey road, I saw one in the field of my glass — a quiet, cloaked figure, moving along, shrouded, and looking neither to right nor left. And thus was it with these beings ever. It was told about in the Redoubt that they would harm no human, if but the human did keep a fair distance from them; but that it were wise never to come close upon one. And this I can well believe. And so, searching the road with my gaze, I passed beyond this Silent One, and past the place where the road, sweeping vastly to the South-East, was lit a space, strangely, by the light from the Silver Fire Holes. And thus at last to where it swayed to the South of the Dark Palace, and thence Southward still, until it passed round to the Westward, beyond the mountain bulk of the Watching Thing in the South — the hugest monster in all the visible Night Lands. My spyglass showed it to me with clearness — a living hill of watchfulness, known to us as the Watcher of the South. It brooded there, squat and tremendous, hunched over the pale radiance of the Glowing Dome.

Much, I know, had been writ concerning this Odd, Vast Watcher; for it had grown out of the blackness of the South Unknown Lands a million years gone; and the steady growing nearness of it had been noted and set out at length by the men they called Monstruwacans; so that it was possible to search in our libraries, and learn of the very coming of this Beast in the olden-time. And, while I mind me, there were even then, and always, men named Monstruwacans, whose duty it was to take heed of the great Forces, and to watch the Monsters and the Beasts that beset the great Pyramid, and measure and record, and have so full a knowledge of these same that, did but one but sway an head in the darkness, the same matter was set down with particularness in the Records.

And so to tell more about the South Watcher. A million years gone, as I have set out, came it out from the blackness of the South, and grew steadily nearer through twenty thousand years; but so slow that in no one year could a man perceive that it had moved. Yet it had movement, and had come thus far upon its road to the Redoubt, when the Glowing Dome rose out of the ground before it — growing slowly. And this had stayed the way of the Monster; so that through an eternity it had looked toward the

Pyramid across the pale glare of the Dome, and seeming to have no power to advance nearer. And because of this, much had been writ to prove that there were other forces than evil at work in the Night Land, about the Last Redoubt. And this I have always thought to be wisely said; and, indeed, there to be no doubt to the matter, for there were many things in the time of which I have knowledge, which seemed to make clear that, even as the Forces of Darkness were loose upon the End of Man; so were there other Forces out to do battle with the Terror; though in ways most strange and unthought of by the human soul. And of this I shall have more to tell anon.



The Watcher of the South

And here, before I go further with my telling, let me set out some of that knowledge which yet remains so clear within my mind and heart. Of the coming of these monstrosities and evil Forces, no man could say much with verity; for the evil of it began before the Histories of the Great Redoubt were shaped; aye, even before the sun had lost all power to light; though, it must not be a thing of certainty that even at this far time the invisible, black heavens held no warmth for this world; but of this I have no room to tell; and must pass on to that of which I have a more certain knowledge. The evil must surely have begun in the Days of the Darkening (which I might liken to a story which was believed doubtfully, much as we of this day believe the Story of the Creaton). A dim record there was of those olden sciences (that are yet far off in our future) which, disturbing the unmeasurable Outward Powers, had allowed to pass the Barrier of this Life some of those Monsters and Ab-human creatures, which are so wondrously cushioned from us at this normal present. And thus there had materialized, and in other cases developed, grotesque and horrible Creatures, which now beset the humans of this world. And where there was no power to take on material form, there had been allowed to certain dreadful Forces to have power to affect the life of the human spirit. And this growing very dreadful, and the world full of lawlessness and degeneracy; there had banded together the sound millions, and built the Last Redoubt; there in the twilight of the world (so it seems to us, and yet to them bred at last to the peace of usage) as it were the Beginning; and this I can make no clearer; and none hath right to expect it; for my task is very great, and beyond the power of human skill. And when the humans had built the great Pyramid, it had one thousand three hundred and twenty floors; and the thickness of each floor was according to the strength of its need. And the whole height of this pyramid exceeded seven miles, by near a mile, and above it was a tower from which watchmen looked (these being called the Monstruwacans). But where the Redoubt was built, I know not; save that I believe in a mighty valley of which I may tell more in due time.

And when the Pyramid was built, the last millions, who were the Builders thereof, went within, and made themselves a great house and city of this Last Redoubt. And thus began the Second History of this world. And how shall I set it all down in these little pages! For but my task, even as I see it, is too great for the power of a single life and a single pen. Yet, to it!

And, later, through hundreds and thousands of years, there grew up in the

Outer Lands, beyond those which lay under the guard of the Redoubt, mighty and lost races of terrible creatures, half men and half beast and evil and dreadful; and these made war upon the Redoubt; but were beaten off from that grim, metal mountain, with a vast slaughter. Yet, must there have been many such attacks, until the electric circle was put about the Pyramid, and lit from the Earth Current. And the lowest half-mile of the Pyramid was sealed; and so at last there was a peace, and the beginnings of that Eternity of quiet watching for the day when the Earth Current shall become exhausted. And, at whiles, through the forgotten centuries, had the Creatures been glutted time and again upon such odd bands of daring ones as had adventured forth to explore through the mystery of the Night Lands; for of those who went, scarce any did ever return; for there were eyes in all that dark; and Powers and Forces abroad which had all knowledge; or so we must fain believe.

And now to continue my telling concerning the Night Land. The Watcher of the South, was as I have set to make clear, a monster differing from those other Watching Things, of which I have spoken, and of which there were in all four. One to the North West, and one to the South East, and of these I have told; and the other twain lay brooding, one to the South West, and the other to the North East, and thus the four watchers kept ward through the darkness, upon the Pyramid, and moved not, neither gave they out any sound. Yet did we know them to be mountains of living watchfulness and hideous and steadfast intelligence. I passed now to the South Western side of the Pyramid and looked out at the tower that stood on the far edge of the Deep Valley of the Red Smoke.

The South-West Watcher

Beyond these, South and West of them, was the enormous bulk of the South West Watcher, and from the ground rose what we named the Eye Beam — a single ray of grey light, which came up out of the ground, and lit the right eye of the monster. And because of this light, that eye had been mightily examined through unknown thousands of years; and some held that the eye looked through the light steadfastly at the Pyramid; but others set out that the light blinded it, and was the work of those Other Powers which were abroad to do combat with the Evil Forces. But however this may be, as I stood there in the embrasure, and looked at the thing through the spy-glass, it seemed to my soul that the Brute looked straightly at me, unwinking and steadfast, and fully of a knowledge that I spied upon it. And this is how I felt.

To the North of this, in the direction of the West, I saw the Place Where the Silent Ones Kill; and this was so named, because there, maybe ten thousand years gone, certain humans adventuring from the Pyramid, came off the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk, and into that place, and were immediately destroyed. And this was told by one who escaped; though he died also very quickly: for his heart was frozen. And this I cannot explain; but so it was set out in the Records.

The Watcher of the North East

Far away beyond the Place Where The Silent Ones Kill, in the very mouth of the Western Night was the Place of the Ab-humans, where was lost the Road Where The Silent Ones Walk, in a dull green, luminous mist. And of this place nothing was known; though much it held the thoughts and attentions of our thinkers and imaginers; for some said that there was a Place of Safety, differing from the Redoubt (as we of this day suppose Heaven to differ from the Earth), and that the Road led thence; but was barred by the Ab-humans. And this I can only set down here; but with no thought to justify or uphold it.

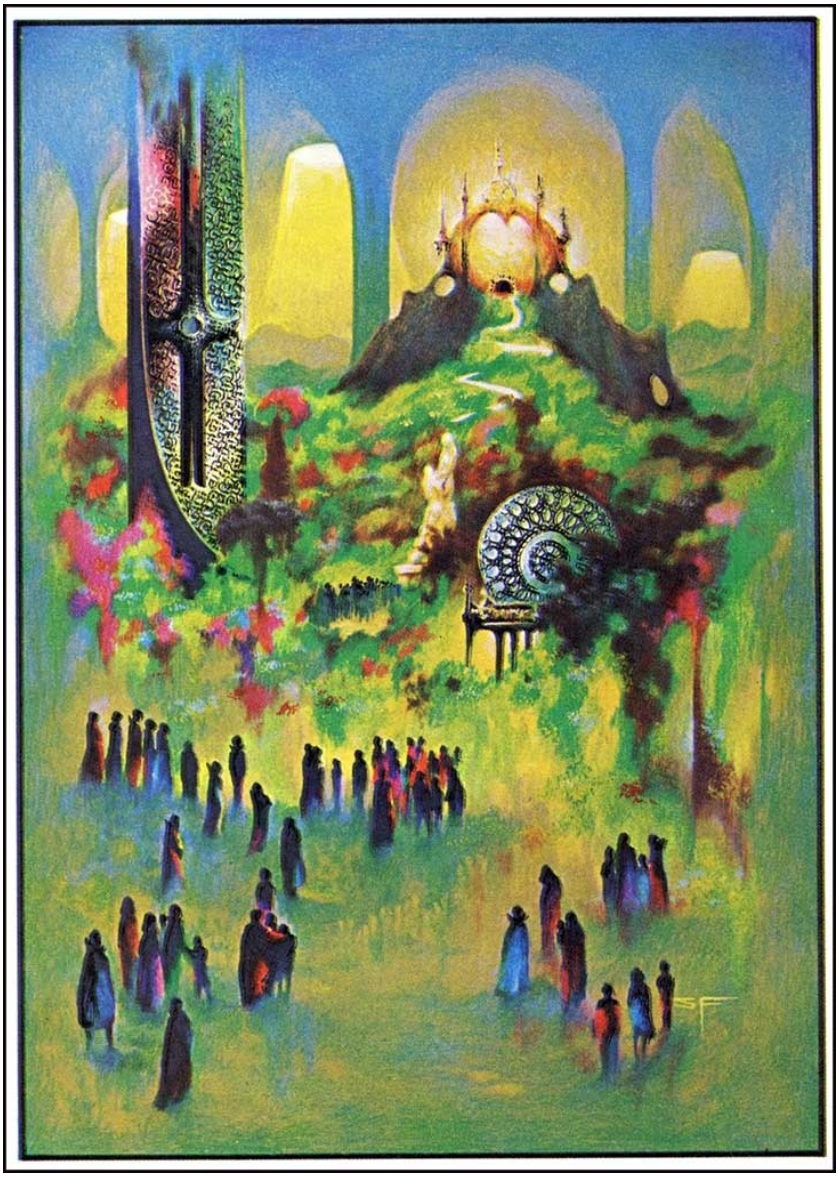
Later, I travelled over to the North Eastern wall of the Redoubt, and looked thence with my spy-glass at the Watcher of the North East – the Crowned Watcher it was called, in that within the air above its vast head there hung always a blue, luminous ring, which shed a strange light downwards over the monster – showing a vast, wrinkled brow (upon which an whole library has been writ); but putting to the shadow all the lower face; all save the ear, which came out from the back of its head, and belled towards the Redoubt, and had been said by some observers in the past to have been seen to quiver: but how that may be, I know not; for no man of our days had seen such a thing.

And beyond the Watching Thing, was The Place Where The Silent Ones Are Never, close by the great road; which was bounded upon the far side by The Giant's Sea; and upon the far side of that was a Road which was always named The Road by the Quiet City; for it passed along that place where burned forever the constant and never moving lights of a strange city; but no glass had ever shown life there; neither had any light ever ceased to burn. And beyond that again was The Black Mist. And here, let me say, that The Valley of The Hounds ended towards the Lights of the Quiet City.

And so have I set out something of that land, and of those creatures and circumstances which beset us about, waiting until the Day of Doom, when our Earth Current should cease, and leave us helpless to the Watchers, and the abundant terrors. And there I stood, and looked forth composedly, as may one who has been born to know of such matters, and reared in the knowledge of them. And, anon, I would look upward, and see the grey, metalled mountain going up measureless into the gloom of the everlasting night; and from my feet the sheer downward sweep of the grim, metal walls, four full miles, or more, to the plain below.

And one thing (aye! and I fear me, many) have I missed to set out clearly. There was all around the base of the Pyramid, which was five and one-quarter miles every way, a great circle of light which was set up by the Earth Current, and burned within a transparent tube; or had that appearance. And it bounded the Pyramid for a clear mile upon every side, and burned forever; and none of the monsters dared ever to pass across, neither had the Evil Powers ability to cause harm to any within; yet there were some dangers against which it might not avail; but these had no cunning to bring harm to any within the Great Redoubt, who had wisdom to meddle with no dreadfulness. And so were those last millions guarded until the Earth Current should be used to its end. And this circle is that which I have called the Electric Circle; though with failure to explain. But there it was called The Circle.

And thus have I, with great effort, made a little clear that grim land of night, where, presently, my listening heard one calling across the dark. And how that this grew upon me, I will set out forthwith.



The Garden of Silence

Now, oft had I heard tell, not only in that great city which occupied the thousandth floor, but in others of the one thousand, three hundred and twenty cities of the Pyramid, that there was somewhere out in the desolation of the Night Lands a second Place of Refuge, where had gathered, in another part of this dead world, some last millions of the human race, to fight unto the end. And this story I heard everywhere in my travels through the cities of the Great Redoubt, which travels began when I came upon my seventeenth year, and continued for three years and two hundred and twenty-five days, being even then but one day in each city, as was the custom in the training of every child. And truly it was a great journey, and in it I met with many whom to know was to love; but whom never could I see again; for life has not space enough; and each must to his duty to the security and well-being of the Redoubt. Yet, for all that I have set down, we travelled much, always; but there were so many millions, and so few years.

And, as I have said, everywhere I went there was the same story of this other Place of Refuge; and in such of the Libraries of those cities, as I had time to search, there were great numbers of works upon the existence of this other Refuge; and some, far back in the years, made assertion with confidence that such a Place was in verity; and, indeed, no doubt did there seem in those by-gone ages; but now these very records were read out by Scholars, who doubted, even whilst they read. And so is it ever.

Now below the Great Redoubt lay the Underground Fields. And of the Underground Fields (though in that age we called them no more than "The Fields") I should set down a little; for they were the mightiest work of this world; so that even the Last Redoubt was but a small thing beside them. An hundred miles deep lay the lowest of the Underground Fields, and was an hundred miles from side to side, every way; and above it there were three hundred and six fields, each one less in area than that beneath; and in this wise they tapered, until the topmost field which lay direct beneath the lowermost floor of the Great Redoubt, was but four miles every way. And thus it will be seen that these fields, lying one beneath the other, formed a mighty and incredible Pyramid of Country Lands in the deep earth, an hundred miles from base to the topmost field. And the whole was sheathed in at the sides with the grey metal of which the Redoubt was builded; and each field was pillared, and floored beneath the soil, with this same compound of wonder; and so was it secure, and the monsters could

not dig into that mighty garden from without. And all of that Underground Land was lit, where needed, by the Earth Current, and that same life-stream fructified the soil, and gave life and blood to the plants and to the trees, and to every bush and natural thing. And the making of those fields had taken maybe a million years, and the "dump" thereof had been cast into the "Crack," whence came the Earth Current, and which had bottom beyond all soundings.2

Now there was presently, in the Garden of Silence, which was the lowermost of all the Underground Fields, the Ending of those seventeen hundred heroes, and of the Youths that they saved and slew. And the Garden was a great country, and an hundred miles every way, and the roof thereof was three great miles above, and shaped to a vast dome; as it had been that the Builders and Makers thereof did remember in their spirits the visible sky of this our Present Age. And the making of that Garden was all set out in a single History of Seven Thousand and Seventy Volumes. And there were likewise seven thousand and seventy years spent to the making of that Country; so that there had unremembered generations lived and laboured and died, and seen not the end of their labour. And Love had shaped it and hallowed it; so that of all the wonders of the world, there had been none that shall ever come anigh to that Garden of Silence — an hundred miles every way of Silence to the Dead.

And there were in that roof seven moons set in a mighty circle, and lit by the Earth Current; and the circle was sixty miles across, so that all that Country of Quiet was visible; yet to no great glare, but a sweet holy light; so that I did always feel in my heart that a man might weep there, and be unashamed. And in the midst of that silent Country, there was a great hill, and upon the hill a vast Dome. And the Dome was full of a Light that might be seen in all that Country, which was the Garden of Silence. And beneath the Dome was the "Crack," and within it the glory of the Earth-Current, from which all had life and light and safety. And in the Dome at the North, there was a gateway; and a narrow road went upwards to the gateway, and the Road was named The Last Road, and the Gateway was named by no name; but known to all, as The Gateway.

And there were in that mighty Country, long roadways, and hidden methods to help travel; and constant temples of rest along the miles; and groves; and the charm of water, falling. And everywhere the Statues of Memory, and the Tablets of Memory, and the whole of that Great

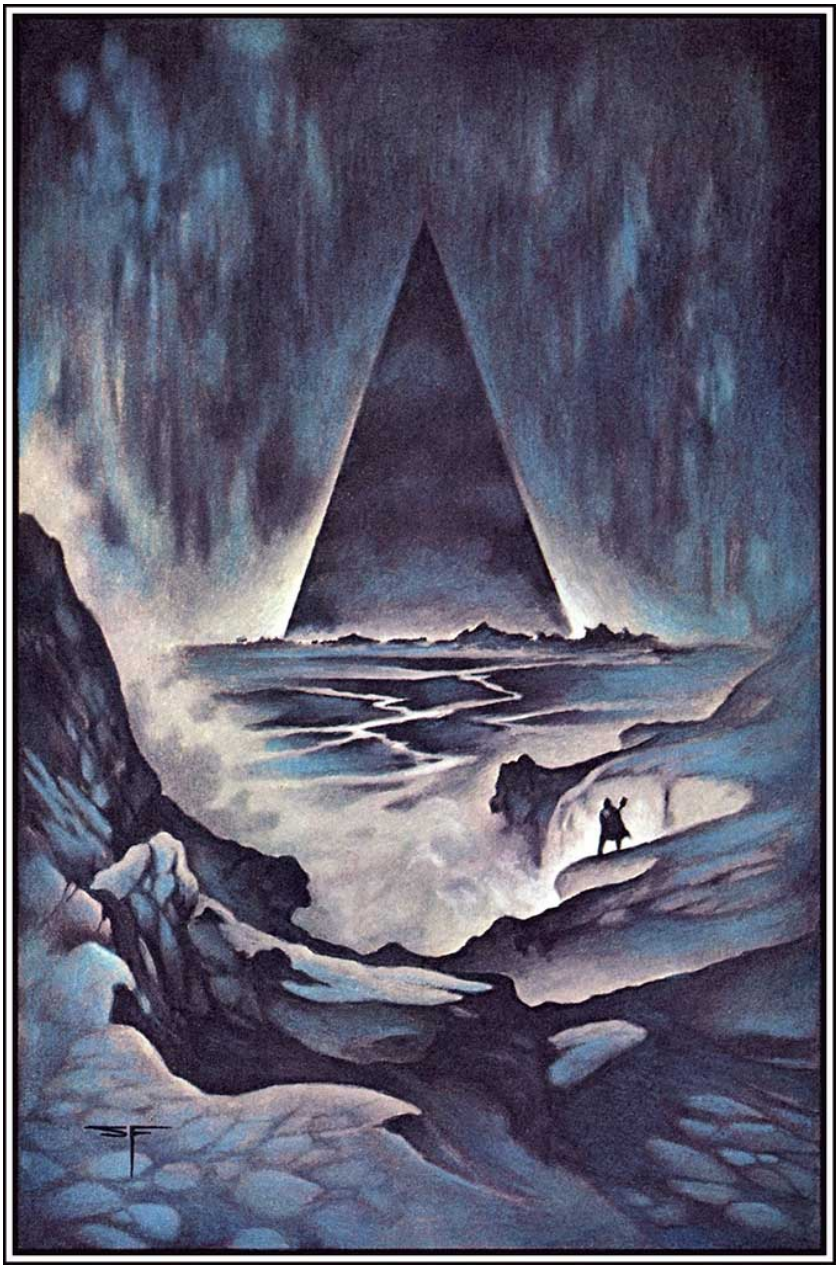
Underground Country full of an echo of Eternity and of Memory and Love and Greatness; so that to walk alone in that Land was to grow back to the wonder and mystery of Childhood; and presently to go upwards again to the Cities of the Mighty Pyramid, purified and sweetened of soul and mind. And in my boyhood, I have wandered oft, a week of days in that Country of Silence, and had my food with me, and slept quietly amid the memories; and gone on again, wrapped about with the quiet of the Everlasting. And the man-soul within would be drawn mightily to those places where the Great Ones of the past Eternity of the World had their Memory named; but there was that within me which ever drew me, in the ending, to the Hills of the Babes; those little Hills where might be heard amid the lonesomeness of an utter quiet, a strange and wondrous echo, as of a little child calling over the hills. But how this was I know not, save by the sweet cunning of some dead Maker in the forgotten years. And here, mayhaps by reason of this Voice of Pathos, were to be found the countless Tokens of Memory to all the babes of the Mighty Pyramid, through a thousand ages. And, odd whiles, would I come upon some Mother, sitting there lonely, or mayhaps companied by others. And by this little telling shall you know somewhat of the quietness and the wonder and the holiness of that great Country hallowed to all Memory and to Eternity and to our Dead.

And it was here, into the Country of Silence, that they brought down the Dead to their Burial. And there came down into the Country of Silence, maybe an Hundred Million, out of the Cities of the Pyramid, to be present, and to do Honour.

Now they that had charge of the Dead, did lay them upon the road which ran up unto The Gateway, even that same road which was named The Last Road. And the Road moved upwards slowly with the Dead; and the Dead went inward through the Gateway; first the poor Youths, and afterward they that had given up life that they might save them. And as the Dead went upwards, there was a very great Silence over all the miles of the Country of Silence. But in a little while there came from afar off, a sound as of a wind wailing; and it came onwards out of the distance, and passed over the Hills of the Babes, which were a great way off. And so came anigh to the place where I stood. Even as the blowing of a sorrowful wind did it come; and I knew that all the great multitudes did sing quietly; and the singing passed onwards, and left behind it an utter silence; even as the wind doth rustle the corn and pass onwards, and all fall to a greater-seeming quietness than before. And the Dead passed inward through The

Gateway, into the great light and silence of the Dome and came out no more. And again from beyond the far Hills of the Babes there was that sound of the millions singing; and there rose up out of the earth beneath, the voices of the underground organs, and the noise of the sorrow passed over me, and went again into the distance, and left all hushed.

And lo! as there passed inward to the silence of the Dome the last of those dead Heroes, there came again the sound from beyond the Hills of the Babes; and as it came more nigh, I knew that it was the Song of Honour, loud and triumphant, and sung by countless multitudes. And the Voices of the Organs made an honour to the dead.



The Lesser Redoubt

3And, in a while, I found the Road where the Silent Ones Walk, to bend inward at the North of the House of Silence; so that it came right horridly close unto the House; for here the hill on which the House did stand, was very abrupt and fell steeply unto the Road. And so was that Dreadful House stood up there above me in the Silence, as that it did seem to brood there upon the Land. And this side did seem truly as the other; and equal lone and dreadful.

And the House was monstrous and huge, and full of quiet lights; and it was truly as that there had been no Sound ever in that House through Eternity; but yet was it as that the heart did think each moment to see quiet and shrouded figures within, and yet never were they seen; and this I do but set down that I bring all home unto your hearts also, as that you crouched there with me in those low moss-bushes, there beside the Great Road, and did look upward unto that Monstrous House of Everlasting Silence, and did feel the utterness of silence to hang about it in the night; and to know in your spirits the quiet threat that lived silent there within.

And so shall you have mind of me, hid there among the bushes, and sodden and cold; and yet, as you will perceive, so held in my spirit by an utter terror and loathing and solemn wonder and awe of that Mighty House of Quietness loomed above me in the Night, that I wotted not of the misery of my body, because that my spirit was so in terror for the life of my Being4 that the Master-Word did beat softly about me, out of all the night of the world. And all mine heart did throb with great glowings of joy; yet was the beat of the Word unsure, so that I knew not truly whether my Spirit had indeed heard aught, for there was immediately a silence, as ever, about mine inward being. Yet, as you shall believe, there was a new hope and strength of courage in all my body and soul.

And I went forward very swift, and all renewed, as it were; and my strength and hope did make naught of any terror that should lie to bar my way, neither did I have further heed of the boulders that lay always upon my path, but did go over them with quick leapings, and a wondrous and thrilling eagerness of the heart within me.

And, sudden, in the end of the tenth hour, I perceived that the mighty walls of blackness that made the sides of the Gorge be no more there, and that I was come truly upon the end of the Gorge. And I near trembled with hope and astonishment; for when I was gone a little way on, I had ceased

to go upward any more, and was come clear out from the mouth of the Gorge, and did peer forth across a mighty country of night. And it did seem to me as that I was come to a second Land of strange matters, even as the Night Land where did lie the wonder of the Mighty Pyramid. And surely, I did think within mine heart that I was come at last to that far and hidden place of the world where did be the Lesser Redoubt. But yet was there no place in all that night where did tower the shining lights of the Lesser Pyramid, the which I did hope vainly to perceive. And a new despair came upon me; for indeed, it seemed I was come all astray in the night of the World, and did nowise have any knowing whether I stood near to the Country of the Lesser Redoubt, or whether that I was gone half across the World unto a strange place.

And, then, as the despair troubled my spirit and dulled the beating of mine heart, a sudden thought did light up a fresh hope within me; for, indeed, as you do know, I was come upward of a great height, and did surely have a huge view over all that Land; and mayhaps the Lesser Pyramid did lie somewhere in a valley, if, in verity, it did be anywheres at all in that Country. And I turned me from the cliffs, and lookt backward over all the night of the Land; but there was nowhere in all that Country the shining of the Lights of the Lesser Pyramid.

And lo! of a sudden I did know that there was something in the night. And I stared, with a very keen and anxious look. And behold there was the black shape of a great pyramid afar off in the night, that did show against the shining of the distant light; for it did stand between me and the far off fires. But until I was come to that place, whence I did look, I had not stood to have it plain against the shining upon the other side of that Land. And how I did feel in that moment, I have no words to set out unto you. But surely was mine heart gracious with thankfulness, and I ready to leap with joy and hope, and all my body thrilled with an excitement that would not have me to be silent; so that, suddenly, I began to shoot foolishly across the night. But came soon to wisdom and silence, as you shall think. And I ran down into the Land, and many hours I went; and presently I sat me down to rest.

And, after that I had sat there awhile, I did mind me suddenly that I should send the Master-Word through the night; for, indeed, how else might I ever know whether Naani did yet live; though, in truth, I had little, save desperate hope, in this matter; but yet did remember how that I had

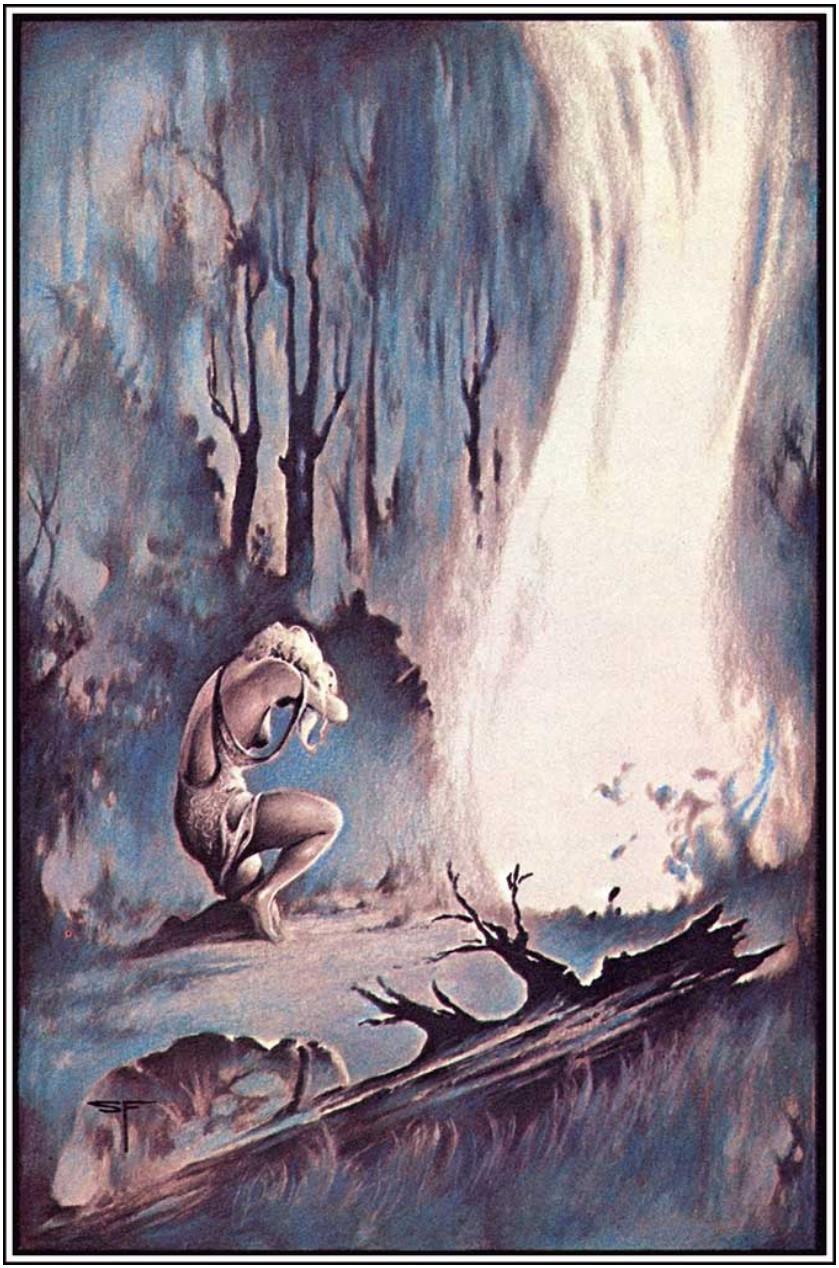
seemed odd times of my journey to hear the beat of the Master-Word with my spirit, out of all the dark of the world. And, in verity, if Naani answered not, but there came instead an Evil Power to destroy me, I should but cease me of mine utter misery the more speedy.

And I stood me upon my feet, and looked outward about me into the blackness of that Land. And I sent the Master-Word with my brain-elements; and immediately I called Naani, thrice, sending the call with my brain-elements.

And lo! in a moment, as it did seem, there broke around me out of all the mystery of night, low and solemn, the Master-Word, beating in the night. And immediately there did sound within my brain a far, small voice, very lone and faint, as that it had come from the end of the world. And the voice was the voice of Naani and the voice of Mirdath, and did call me by mine olden love-name.

Then, indeed, I did near to choke with the utter affright of joy that did take me in the heart, and also I was shaken with a mighty excitement, and my despair was gone, as that I had never known it. For, in verity, Naani did live and did call unto me with her brain-elements; and surely I had not heard the voice of mine Own for an utter age of grim labour and dread.

And the voice was, as I did say, as that it came from one that did be in a far place of the earth. And, in verity, whilst I stood dazed with a great joy that the Maid did live, I knew within me, concerning the fear that she was utter far off; and what peril might come anigh to her, before that I should stand to her side, to do battle for her life and well-being and mine own joy.



Naani at the fire-hole

And lo! in the same moment, and before that I made further speech unto Naani, I did wot that some one did be a little way off from me, in the bushes, where a fire hole did burn anigh to me; and it was as that my spirit knew this thing, and told of it unto my brain. And I made no answer unto the Maid, across all the dark of the world; but went very swift into a great bush that was nigh to the fire-hole, upon this side. And I lookt through, into the open space that did be about the fire-hole. And there was a little figure that did kneel, sobbing, upon the earth, beside the fire-hole; and truly it was a slim maid, and she did seem as that she harked very desperate, even whilst yet she did sob. And surely, mine own soul did Know, all in one white moment of life. And she there, unknowing, and harking unto a cry of the spirit, that she did think to come through all the desolation of the night — even from the Mighty Pyramid. For oft, as I did perceive, had she cried unto me in all that lonesome month, and known no answer; neither that I was making a desperate way unto her; for, indeed, her weakness was great, so that she had no power to throw the Word strongly afar, neither to make plain her spiritual cryings through any mighty space of the aether.

And lo! I drew in my breath, and set my teeth a moment, to steady my lips; and I said: — "MIRDATH," out of the bush where I did be, and using natural human speech. And the Maid ceased from her weeping, and lookt this way and that, with an utter new fear, and with a frightened hope that did shine with her tears in the light from the fire-hole. And I divided the bush before me, and went through the bush, so that I came out before her, and did be there in my grey armour; and I did pause then, and was all adrift in myself; for mine heart said that I should take this Maid into mine arms again; for that I was come again to be with Mirdath after an utter lost Eternity. But yet was I all paused; for truly she was Naani and she was Mirdath, and she did be a stranger in mine eyes, and very dainty and pretty and shaken with woe and sore trouble and grief.

And in that same moment of my coming unto her out of the bush, she screamed and fell back from me, and strove weakly to gain unto the hither bushes; for, truly, she knew not what was come upon her in that first little moment. And immediately she saw that it did be an human man, and no monster to slay her, and in that instant I said the Master-Word unto her, aloud, that she should have knowledge of peace and help. And I told my name, and said I am That One.

And she knew this thing, even as my lips made the sounds. And she cried

out something in an utter broke voice, and ran unto me, and thrust her two small hands into my charge and keeping, and fell thence into a great sobbing and shaking, so that I was all in trouble to ease her; but did keep a silence and held fast her hands, for I had not on mine armoured gloves. And she leaned against me, very weak, and seeming wondrous like to a child. And lo! in a while she ceased to sob, and did but catch her breath this time and that, but said no word. And I bethought me that she did suffer of hunger, for I perceived that she had been long wandering and alone, and was come unto the end of hope, when that I did come.

And the Maid stood there yet silent, for she might not yet command her mouth to speak. And she trembled as she stood. And I opened my left hand, and lookt at the hand within my palm, and surely it was utter thin and wasted. And I made no more pause, but lifted mine Own and set her easy upon the earth, with an hump of smooth rock unto her back. And I stript off my cloak very quick, and put it about her, for she was scarce covered with her clothes that had been all torn among the bushes; so that part she shook with an utter chill, and part because of weakness, for she was nigh to be starved unto her death, and destroyed with her grief and lonesomeness.

And I took from my back the scrip and the pouch, and I gat a tablet from the scrip, and brake it into my cup, and with the water I made a little broth very swift upon an hot rock that was to the edge of the fire-hole. And I fed the broth unto the Maid; for truly her hands did shake so that she had spilt it all, if that I had done otherwise.

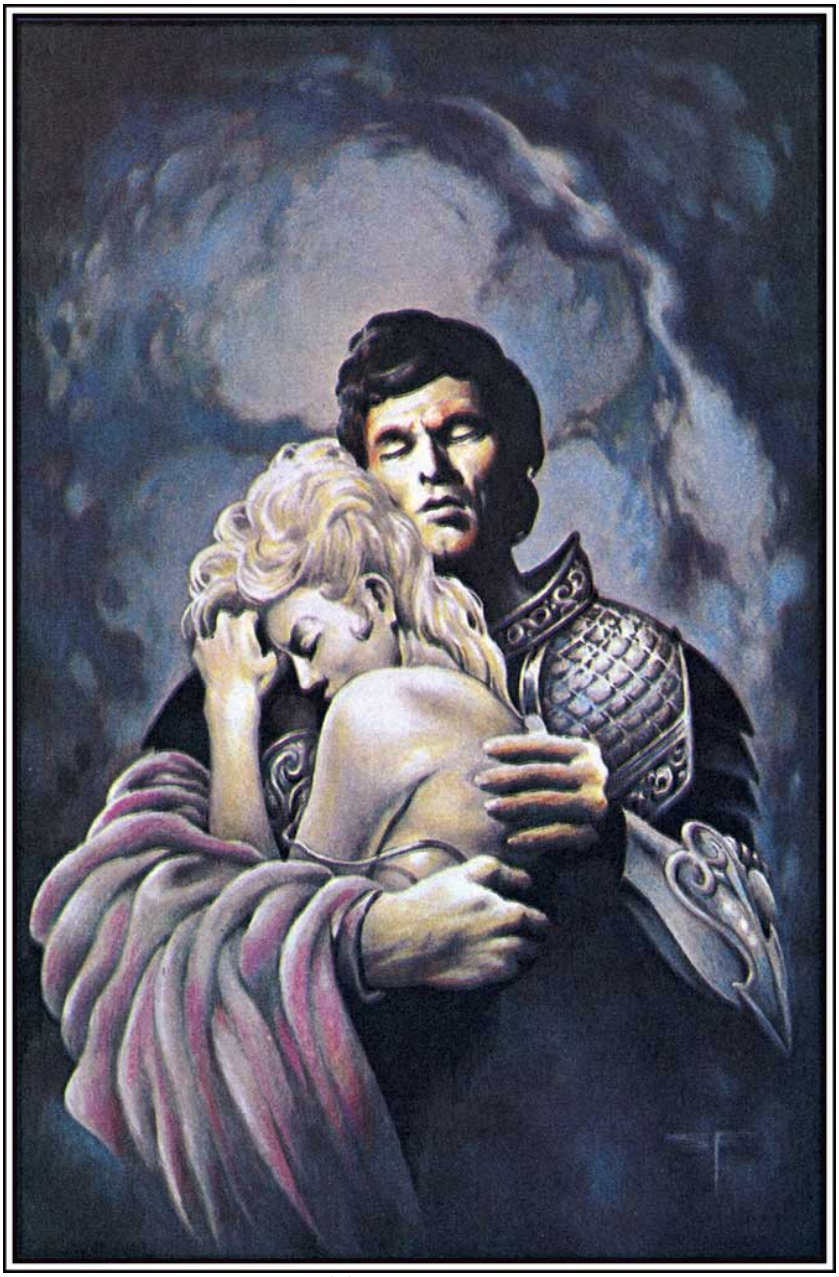
And she drank the broth, and was so weak that presently she did fall again to sobbing, yet very quiet; so that I strove not to be troubled in the heart; for, indeed, this thing was but reasonable, and not cause for me to have an anxiousness. But I put mine hands under the cloak and took her hands into mine and held them strong and firm; and that did seem to bring something of peace and strength unto her; so that presently the trembling and the weeping went from her. And, indeed, the broth was surely helpful in this matter.

And presently, I knew that her hands did stir a little within mine, and I loosed somewhat of my grip; and immediately she did graspt mine hands with a weak and gentle grasp; but lookt not yet at me; only did stay very quiet, as that she did gather her strength within her. And, indeed, I was content: save that an anxiousness of the heart did stir me this time and that,

lest some monster should come upon us. And because of this trouble, I did hark about me, now and oft, and with a new and strange fearfulness of danger, because that now mine Own was given unto my charge; and surely mine heart would break, if that there came any hurt unto her.

Now, of a sudden, the Maid did make as that she would rise, and I loosed free from her, to give help. And she gat me by the hand, and slipt sudden to her knees, and did kiss mine hand, and did begin again to weep. And surely I was so utter abashed that I stood very stupid and let her do this thing. But in a moment I drew free from her; for this thing might not be. And I gat me to my knee likewise before her, and took her hands, and kist them once, newly humbled, as it were, very humbly; and thus should she know all that was in mine heart, and of mine understanding. And she did but sob the more; for she was so weak, and utter moved unto me, because that I had come to her through the night of the world. And this thing I knew, though no speech had yet past between us. And I gave up her hands, lest she need them for her tears; but she left them to lie in my palms, as she did kneel there; and she bowed her head a little over her weeping; but did show that she was mine, in verity, unto the very essence of her dear spirit.

And I took her into mine arms, very gently and without caress; but presently I stroked her hair, and called her Naani and Mirdath, and said many things unto her, that now I scarce do wot of, but she did know them in the after time. And she was very quiet in mine arms, and seeming wondrous content; but yet did sob onward for a great time. And oft did I coax her and say vague things of comfort, as I have told. But truly she did ask no more comfort at that time than that she be sheltered where she did be. And truly she had been lonesome and in terror and in grief and dread, a great and horrid time.



I took her into mine arms. . .

Now, presently, she was grown quiet; and I made to put her comfortable in the cloak against the rock that I should have freedom to make her more of the broth. But yet she did nestle unto me, with a little sweet wistfulness, that made warm mine heart in a most wondrous fashion; for surely she was mine Own. And she to begin to say odd words to me. And so to have gentle obedience to me, and to rest quiet against the rock, the while that I did make the broth. Yet ever her gaze did follow me, as I knew; for I must look oft her way.

And I took the broth to her, and she drank it, using her own two hands; and I sat by, and eat three of the tablets and drank some of the water, for truly it was a foolish great time since last I had eat.

Now, in a while, the broth did make bright the eyes of the Maid, and she did begin to talk; and at whiles had pauses, because that she lacked of strength, and there was more to be told than an human may have the heart-strength and cunning to make plain. And twice she did come again to sobbing; for, truly, her father was dead and the Peoples of the Lesser Redoubt all slain and dispersed through that Dreadful Land.

And so we two set out presently, after a great sleep, to the return journey. And made the whole way in a matter of maybe a month more, and so were come at last to the top of the mighty slope, and had sight of the Great Redoubt.

And, in verity, I did stare with a fierce eagerness unto the far off place in the middle part of the Night Land, where did be the Mighty Pyramid; and surely it there to shine in the midst of the land, and did be mine Home, where never had I dared hope I should return. And I set mine arm very swift and eager about the Maid, and pointed, so that she see quickly the wonder and safe Mightiness of that which did be our Refuge for all our life to come, if but that we to win unto it. And the Maid to look with a great and earnest soberness and a lovely gladness and utter soul and heart interest, unto that Place that bare me, and where I to have come from, and now to take her. And long and long she lookt; and sudden came round unto me, and set her arms quick about my neck, and burst unto a strange and happy weeping. And I to hold her gentle to me, and let her cry very natural, until that she was something unpent.

And lo! when that she was eased, she to stand close beside me, and to look

again unto the Mighty Pyramid; and afterward, as she to steady, she to ask an hundred questions, so utter eager and so to thrill with joy and excitement, as that she did be a glad child. And an hundred questions I answered, and showed her new things and Wonders uncounted. And of all strangeness that she then to see, there did none so to shake her in the spirit with terror as did that Dreadful and Horrid House, which did be the House of Silence. And it was as that her very being did know and be repulsed of some Horror that did concern and be in that House; so that she to want to hide in the bushes that did be anigh to the Road; and truly, I to think this wise, and to remember that we did be come into the Power of Monstrosity that was forever abroad in that Land. And so we to begin to go forward; but always in hiding.

The House of Silence

And in the tenth hour were we come something nigh unto the House; for truly, we to be off from the Road Where The Silent Ones Walk, and so to go more straightly, and always to save distance. And we kept so far outward from the House as we might; but could pass it not more than a great mile off, because that the bushes did have their margin near upon our left, as we went; and there to be bareness of rock beyond; and fire-holes in this place and that amid the starkness of the rocky places; that should be like to show us very plain, if that we came outward from the bushes. And moreover, there went upward into the everlasting night one of those Towers of Silence, which did be in this part and that part of the Land, and were thought to hold Strange Watchers. And the Tower stood great and monstrous afar off in the midst of the naked rocks, showing very grey and dim, save when the flare of some great fire did beat upward in the Land, and sent huge and monstrous lights upon it. And we to have need always now to remember this Tower, and to keep the more so to the sheltered hiding of the bushes. Yet, in verity, we to have little thought of aught, save of the grim and threatening terror and monstrousness which did stand forever upon that low hill, and did be the House of Silence.

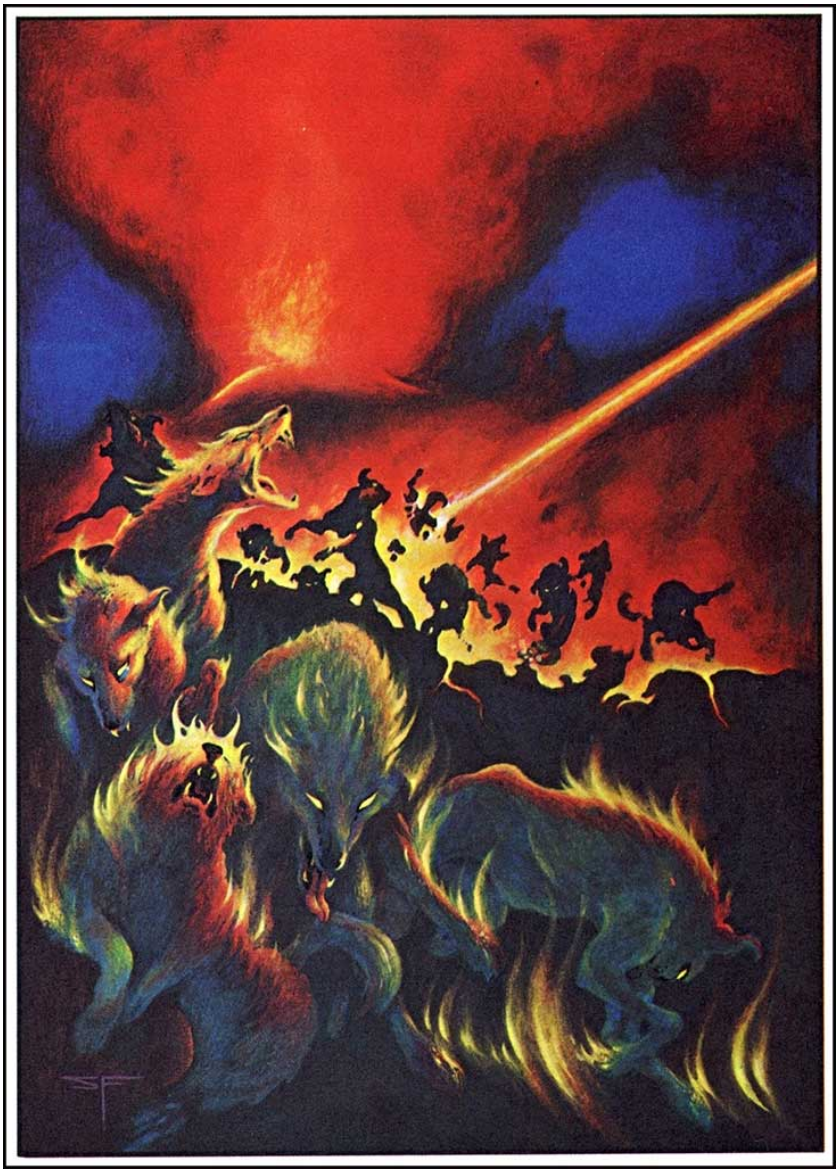
And in the eleventh hour, we did go creeping from bush unto bush, and did be as shadows that went in the mixt greyness and odd shinings of that Land. And the grim and dreadful House did be now unto our right, and did loom huge and utter silent above us in the night. And the lights of the House did shine steadfast and deathless with a noiseless shining, as that they shone out of the quiet of Eternity. And there did a seeming of Unholiness to brood in the air, and a sense of all and deathly Knowledge; so that, surely, our hiding did seem but a futile thing unto our spirits; for it was to us as that we did be watched quiet and always by a Power as we slipt gentle from bush unto bush.

And when the twelfth hour did be nigh, we to begin to draw clear of the House; and surely there to come somewhat of ease into my brain and heart, for it did be as that we should come clear of all harm. And I turned to the Maid, that I whisper gentle and loving encouragement unto her. And lo! in that moment, Mine Own gave out a sudden low sobbing, and was gone still upon the earth. And, truly, mine heart did seem to die in me! for I knew that there did be directed a Force out of the House of Silence, which did be aimed unto the Spirit of Mine Own Maid. And I caught the Maid instant into mine arms, and I set my body between her body and the

dreadness of the House; and surely, my spirit to perceive that there beat out at her a dreadful Force, which did have in it an utter Silence and a bleakness of Desolation. And lo! I saw in a moment that the Force had no power to slay me; but did surely make to slay the Maid. And I set my Spirit and my Will about her, for a shield, if this might be, and I had her to mine arms as that she did be mine own babe. And I stood upright, for there did be no more use to hide; and I knew that I must walk forever until that I have Mine Own to the Shelter of the Mighty Refuge, or to walk until I die; for only with speed might I save her from the dread and horrid Malice of this Force.

And I set free the Diskos from mine hip, and had it in mine arms beside the Maid, and I strode forward out of the bushes, and put forth my strength that I journey with an utter speed. And ever my spirit did know of that monstrous Force which did be direct upon us, to the Destruction of Mine Own Maid. And odd whiles, as I walkt, I called Mine Own by her olden love name, and by the new name of Naani; but never did she move or seem even that she lived; and surely mine heart sickened within me with a mighty despair, so that a constant madness did begin to thrill in me and to make me something monstrous in strength, with my fierce agony and intentness to save. And one hope only had I, that I bring her yet living into the Shelter of the Mighty Refuge; and so, swift, to the care of the Doctors.

And lo! I did strive to be wise in my despair; for I made a quick halting soon, and I warmed a broth of the tablets and water upon a hot rock, and strove that I set some of the broth between the closed lips of Mine Own Maid; yet did it be useless, as I to have known before in my heart. And always I kept my body and my Will and my Spirit and my Love between the Maid and the dreadfulness of the House. And I made some of the water, and dasht it upon the face of Mine Own, and I chafed her hands; but truly it to have no use; neither did I truly to think it should be like to. And I wiped her face then, and harked to her dear heart; and surely it did beat, very slow and husht. And afterward, I wrapt her in the cloak and I lifted her and set forward. And surely no man did ever go so fast, on his feet for an eternity.



The Night Hounds

And three days I went thus; and then as I drew nigh to the Pyramid, I heard, afar off, the baying of the Night Hounds and knew a monstrous pack was out and they came nearer; so that I called out in vain despair and to no end, why that none come to give me aid in this extremity; for the Hounds did bay now but the half of a great mile, upon my left, and did surely have scent of me, by the way of their dreadful baying.

And, truly, the Millions to have an anguish of sympathy for me; for the spiritual noise of their emotion did be plain unto my spirit; and they surely to have seen and to have interpreted the way that I did look about me and affear call out in despair; for there came all about me in a moment the companioning of a great and sweet spiritual force, which I did be bred of their quick going with me in their understanding and love; and they to have perceived how that I did be unto the end of hope; and the Hounds to be almost upon me.

And in this moment, there came to mine hearing the shaking beat of the Earth Current; so that I knew the Humans to take desperate means to save. And there came to my view a vast pack of the Hounds unto my left, and they came running at a great pace, and their heads did be low, and they to be so great as horses; and seen plain, and again in shadow, all in the same moment, as they did come.

And, in verity, I knew that we two to be dead indeed ere a minute be gone, if that the Humans not to haste. And I stood where I did be; for there was no more use to run; and I lookt from the Hounds unto the Mighty Pyramid, and again to the Hounds. And again I lookt with mine hope gone, unto the Pyramid; for the Hounds did be scarce two hundred fathoms off from me; and there did be hundreds of the mighty beasts. And lo! even as I lookt that last time unto the Pyramid, there brake out a monstrous bursting flame, that did rush downward from the Sealed lower part of the Mighty Pyramid. And the flame smote downward upon the Land where the Hounds did run, and all the Night to be lost from my sight in the brightness and strangeness of that mighty flame; so that I saw no more the Pyramid, or aught; but only the shining and dreadful glory of that flame. And the Flame made a blast in the Night, and a hotness that did seem to wither me, even where I did be from it. And I perceived that the Humans had truly turned loose the Earth Current upon the Hounds, that I be saved. And there went a constant great thundering over the land, because that the Earth-Force did rend and split the air, and did tear up the

earth. And the roaring of the Monsters did be husht and lost in that mighty sound; and I to see no place where the Hounds did be; but only flames and broken lands where the Earth-Force did strike; and great rocks did be hurled all whithers, with a vast noise; and truly it did be a mercy that I was not slain an hundred times, if this might be, by the fallings and burstings of great rocks and boulders.

And lo! in a moment the Humans did cut off the Earth-Force, and had it again to their control. And there to seem now a great quietness upon the Land, and an utter dark; save that flames and noise came from that part where the Current did strike. And I very speedy to come free of the dazedness that had me, and made again to my running; for, in truth, it to seem now that I should yet be let to win unto safety with Mine Own.

And mine eyes did grow presently unto their accustomed using; and I saw there went living things, creeping, between me and the light of the Circle. And I to know that I yet to have to fight bitter, if that I would bring the Maid safe. And I swung the Diskos free, and ran on.

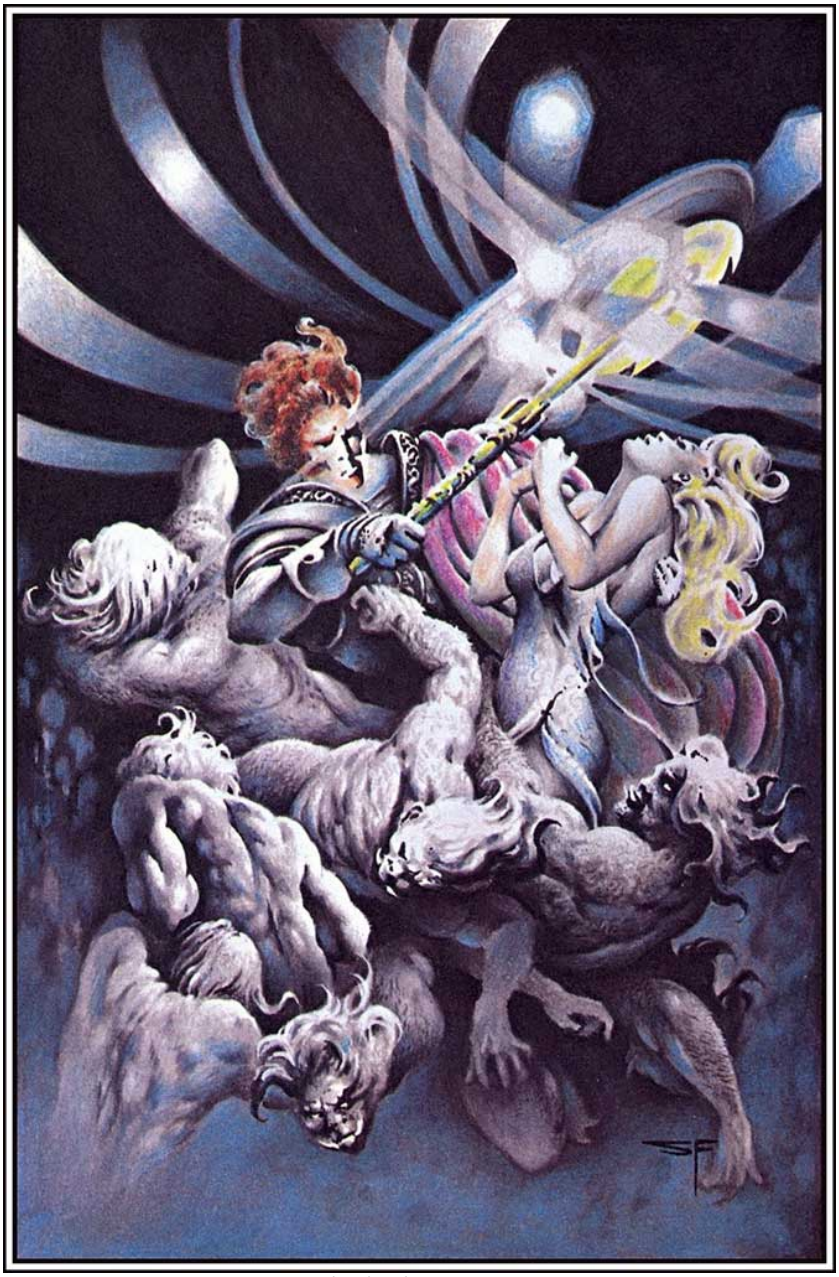
And sudden my Spirit to know that I did be warned of some new peril; and I to look upward into the night, that the Master Monstruwacan should mayhap to tell me the danger, by the Set Speech. But, in truth, there came not the quick flashings of the Set Speech; but only an upward stillness, and a dimness of the lights of the Mighty Pyramid. And afterward, I to learn that the dear Master Monstruwacan made to warn me of danger; but that all the instruments of the Tower of Observation to fail to work, and likewise all the machinery of the Pyramid to cease, even unto the moving of the great lifts, and the moans of the air Pumps; and all to have been this way for nigh a great hour, until that the Earth Current did flow again more full. And surely, this doth show that Death did nigh to come unto all the Millions, because of the great trial that did be made to save us.

But, truly, my spirit did be warned by the trouble of the Millions; so that I went ever more warily, and did look all ways. And lo! sudden I to stare above me into the night; and there to be a pale circle, very quiet and steadfast that did go alway over the twain of us. And I saw that this did be surely one of those sweet Powers of Holiness, that did stand between our souls and some dread Power that came anigh to work our Destruction. And I to have no overfear; but did put my trust in the Force of Holiness, and went forward, running warily.

And surely, I came mayhap so nigh as to within four hundred paces of the Circle; and I to think that I yet to win Mine Own safe and undelayed within the guarding of the Circle. And the light of the Circle did burn dim; so that I had sudden fear whether that it be any more use for a Guard, until that the Earth Current to come more free. And all this as I ran, swift and weary and utter anxious.

And lo! in that moment in a dim place there rose up three beast-men from the earth, and came at me growling. And the first did be so close that I had no room to the Diskos; but beat in the head of the man with the haft-part. And I leaped unto the side then, and swung the Diskos, and did be utter mad, yet chill, with fury; so that the Maid did be no more than a babe in the crook of mine arm. And I came in sudden to meet the two beast-men as they ran at me; and I cut quick and light with the great Weapon, and did have that anger upon me which doth make the heart a place of cold and deadly intent; so that I had a wondrous and brutal judgment to the slaying. And, truly, I slew them as that they had been no more than mice; and I had no harm, neither so much as a touch from them. And, behold! in that moment there came a great Shout of wonder and of welcome from within the Circle. And I lookt swiftly, and began again to run; for there did be men in grey armour all within the Circle; yet came they not to mine aid. And lo! in a moment I knew why that the Hundred Thousand did have held off from me in mine extremity; for, behold! there did be monstrous Black Mounds all along without of the Circle, and did rock and sway with a force of strange life that did set an horror into my soul as I ran; for truly they did be the visible signs of monstrous Forces of Evil. And did any Human have ventured outward beyond the Circle, then had that man been Destroyed in the spirit, and lost utterly; so that none had dared to come; neither had it been of use if any had made themselves to be a sacrifice to aid me; for, truly, they to have been of no use when dead, as you shall say.

And there came a constant shouting from the Hundred Thousand to me, that I haste, and indeed to haste. And truly I did haste with all my strength. And I lookt unto the dear Circle of Holiness that did be above us twain; and it to go steadfast over us; so that I saw we to be surely saved.



X battles the Beast Men

And lo! I to be no more than an hundred paces now from the glowing of the Circle. And behold! even in that instant, there must come brutal things to destroy us; for there came an herd of squat and brutish men all about me in a moment from the shadows, where they had been hid. And they caught at me, and caught at the Maid to tear her from mine arm. And truly, it did be as that they surely to have success; for I could nowise in a moment free myself, and yet to guard the Maid and to use the Diskos. And lo! I kickt with my metal boots, and gave from them, and turned all ways in a moment, and wrenched free; and I leaped back; and the herd of horrid brutes after me. And now I to have space for the Diskos, and a grimness in mine heart; and I came round very sudden, and ran in among the men, smiting. And I hit very swift from right to left, and to and fro with a constant quick circling. And the Diskos did spin and roar, and made a strange light upon the faces of the men; and they to have tusks like to the tusks of pigs. And surely I did rage through them, smiting; and they to seem without end. But I made alway forward unto the glowing of the Circle; and the night be full in that place of the fierce shoutings of the Hundred Thousand; and many — as I did learn — to have tried to come unto me, but that their comrades held them from so useless a dying.

And, in verity, I to be now scarce fifty paces from the glowing of the Circle; and did be night to fall; for I did be all wounded with the fight, and ill with a vast weariness and the despair and madness of my journey; and moreover, as you do know, I not to have slept, but to have carried the Maid forever through days and nights, and to have fought oft. And lo! the Hundred Thousand stood just within the Circle, and they that were to the front did swing each man the Diskos; and they hurled each the Diskos in among the herd of tuskt men that did make to slay me. And surely this to save me; for the herd did thin to my front; and I to gather my strength, and to charge with despair and to smite and never be ceased of smiting; so that there did be dead creatures all about. And behold! I brake through the herd, with Mine Own, and did be upon the Circle. And lo! I stept over the Circle; and a thousand hands did come forward to give me help; yet did none touch me, but gave back from me; for there did be that about me which held them off, as with an awe; for I to be strange unto them. And I stood there in a great silence, and the Diskos in mine hand ran blood to the haft. And maybe I rokt as I stood; for many again did put out their hands, as to hold me, and again drew back, and were silent. And I lookt unto them, and they lookt back at me; and I did gasp awhile, and was strangely

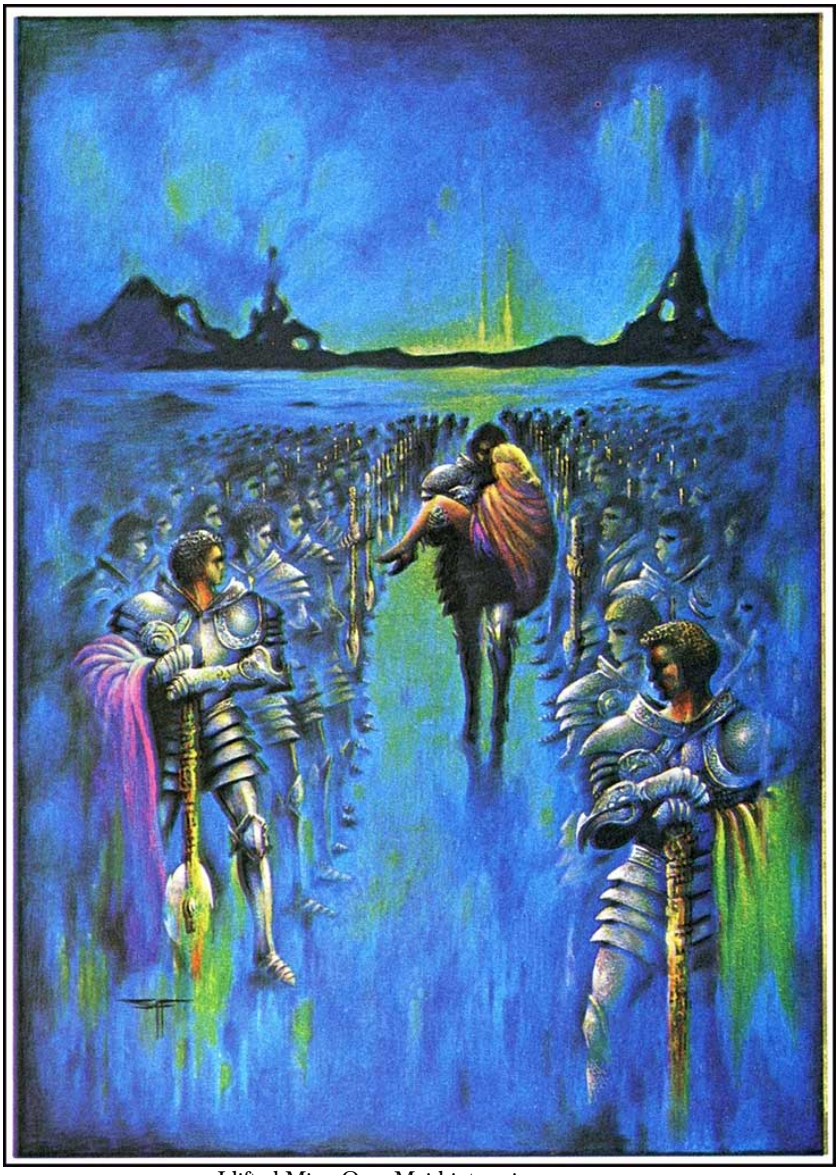
dazed, and did try to tell them that I had need of the Doctors for the Life of Mine Own Maid, that did be dying in mine arms. And behold, in that moment, there did be a sound of giants running out in the night. And some then to cry out different matters, to aid me, and to beware of the giants, and to bring the Doctors to attend me on the instant. And other voices did call that the Holy light was gone from above; and likewise the Black Mounds from the outer part of the Circle. And there did be a monstrous noise of roarings in the Land, and all to come bewildered unto my brain, which did surely fail now with the grim and utter stress which had been mine so long. And there to be also a constant noise that came from near and from upward; and truly I to know, as in a dream, that it did be made of the shouting of the countless Millions, that did make an eternal and vague roaring-sound upward in the night, that did come down from the upper heights, no more loud than a strange and continued murmuring out of the lofty miles.

And surely, I to find my voice in a little minute, and did ask a near man whether there be any Doctors with the men. And in that moment there came forward a Master of the Diskos, which doth be as a Commander of this age. And he made the Salute of Honor with the Diskos, and would have eased the Maid from me; but I to ask again, very slow, whether that there was a Doctor a-near. And he on the instant to give an order; and the great thousands begin to shape, and did make a mighty lane unto the great Gateway of the Mighty Pyramid. And the Master of the Diskos made a sign to certain of they that did be near; and they stood about me, as I to know dully, lest I fall; but they not to touch me; for I did be as that I must not be laid hand upon; for I did near to choke with despair lest I to have come Home too late; and surely, also, the men to seem as that I did be strange unto them.

And there went orders swift and constant this way and that; and lo! in a little while, there came two big men of the Upward Cities, running; and they had a little man between them upon a sling. And the little man did be a Master of the Doctors; and he aided me gentle to lay Mine Own Maid upon the earth. And the Master of the Diskos made a sign, and the men that did be near, turned each his back; and the Doctor to make examination for the life of Mine Own.

And there to come about that time a seeming of silence in the land. And truly the Hundred Thousand did be utter quiet; and a great quiet in the

Mighty Pyramid; for in truth, all to know, by this, that there to be a fear that the Maid I did bring out of the night, did be slain by the Evil Forces.



I lifted Mine Own Maid into mine arms. . .

And sudden the little man that did be the Master Doctor, lookt up quiet and piteous at me; so that I knew in a moment that Mine Own Maid did be dead. And he to see that I knew; and he covered the face of Mine Own, and stood up very speedy; and he called softly to the men that did be to my back, and he signed to them that some to support me, and some to lift Mine Own Maid, and bare her unto the Great Gateway. And he lookt keen at me; and I to fight a little that I breathe; and afterward did make with mine hands, that the men not to come near me, neither to touch Mine Own. And the Master Doctor to understand that I did be truly strong until I die, and did beckon the men from me, and from the Maid.

And I stoopt, in a little, and I lifted Mine Own Maid into mine arms for that last journeying.

And I came down the mighty lane of the Hundred Thousand, all in their grey armor. And they did make silent salute with the Diskos reversed, each man as I past him, and did be utter silent. And I scarce to wot of aught, save that all the world did be quiet and emptied, and my task to have failed, and Mine Own to lie dead in mine arms. Yet, truly, did it to have failed utter? For I had surely saved Mine Own from the terror of the Second Night Land, and she not to have come alone and with madness unto her death; but to have died in mine arms; and she surely to have been comforted within her spirit, because that my love did be so utter about her. And I to think vaguely and terribly on an hundred sweet love actions that she to have shown unto me; and sudden I did remember with a dreadful pain how that I never to have waked to discover Mine Own Maid kissing me in my sleep, as I to have meant. And a madness of anguish did flash sudden through the numbness upon my brain; so that I did be blinded a little, and surely went crooked in my walk; for I to know, sudden, that the Master Doctor steadied mine elbow for a moment; but afterward did leave me be, as I to have again control of my spirit.

And lo! as I drew nigh unto the Great Gateway, the lights of the Pyramid to begin to glow again more strong, and the machinery of the Lifts and the Air Pumps to work, because that now the Earth Current did grow once more to natural strength. And they to have power now to open the Great Gates, which did be done by great machines. And there to come forth to meet me a number of the Masters of the Mighty Pyramid; and the dear Master Monstruwacan did come before them all, so eager as that he did be mine own Father. And he to have heard somewhat, vaguely, that there to

have been a fear for the life of the maid that I did bring. And surely, he did be told by one near to the Gateway, that the Maid did be dead in mine arms; for he and all the Masters did pause and stand silent for me to go by, and did reverse each his Diskos; and this to have been an Honour shown, than which there did be scarce any greater.

And there went a constant murmuring up in the night, which did be the speech of the Millions, questioning. And the news that the Maid did be dead, went upward through the miles. And my spirit to know, as in a dream, of the spiritual noise which did go outward through all space, and did be the grief of the Multitudes, as they did hear this thing. Yet, truly, there did nothing comfort me anywise; neither I proper yet to know the verity of my loss; for I did go stunned.

And I came in through the Great Gateway, and the Full Watch did stand there silent in their armour; and they made the Salute of Honour. And I went onward with the dead Maid that I did bring out of Eternity.

And presently, they that were around, did guide me, with the Maid in mine arms, unto the Great Lift. And I took Mine Own Maid into the Great Lift; and the Masters came with me, and did be in their armour; and none did speak to me. And the Master Monstruwacan and the Master of the Doctors stood silent to the side of me. And there did be everywhere great Multitudes, that I did see vaguely; but my spirit not to wot of them.

And lo! I stood very quiet and dumb as we did go upward through the miles; and the Millions of the Cities stood about the Great Lift, and there did be a great silence upward and downward through the strange miles; save for the weeping of women that did sound far and low and constant.

And presently I to know that the Master Monstruwacan and the Master of the Doctors did look one to the other; and I to be aware sudden that I stood in my blood; for I did be wounded in an hundred parts, and the blood to go alway from me. Yet did the Master Doctor be slow to do aught for me, because that he to perceive that I did be slain in the heart; and there to be no pain so dreadful as that he should be like to wake me unto, if that he went hastily.

Yet, presently, there did come whirlings into mine head; and someone did surely make to ease Mine Own Maid from mine arms. But I held her, dumbly; and the blood to go the more from me; and they not to know

what should be done. And I to look at them. And the dear Master Monstruwacan did be saying somewhat unto me, that I did have no power to hear; but only to know that his face did be human. And there went a strange noise all about me; and the Master Monstruwacan to seem to hold me up, and to beckon to some that did be to my back. And lo! there came a blackness, and the gentleness of arms about mine armour. . . .

And I to come presently to quietness and to half-dreams; and did alway to seem that I carried Mine Own Maid in mine arms. But truly there did pass three great days, whilst that I did be thus. And I all that while to be laid quiet, and to be tended by the Master Doctor, and aided by all knowledge that did be known of the humans.

And on the third day, as it might be called, I to come full unto my senses; and the pain to take me in the breast; and the Master of the Doctors did be with me, and they that nurst me; and the Master Doctor watched me very keen and gentle.

And I did be in a bed of the Health Room of mine own city. And I gat from the bed, and the Doctor to say naught; but only to watch me. And I walkt to and fro a little, and he alway to watch me; and presently he gave me somewhat to drink; and I drank. And I was gone soon from all knowledge.

And I to come again unto a knowing that I yet to live; and there went a certain strength in my body. And lo! the first that I did see, was the Master of the Doctors; and I to perceive in a moment that he had wakened me, and had nurst my strength for that moment, that I live through the Burial. For he to be very wise, and to have known from that first seeing of me, that I not to live after that Mine Own did die.

And there was brought to me a loose garment; but I to refuse the garment, dumbly, and did look about me, very troubled and forgetting. And the Master Doctor lookt alway at me; and lo! in a moment he called one, and gave an order. And there was brought in then my broken armour, and a garment to wear below. And I then to know that I did be content in this matter; and the Doctor alway to watch me. And they drest me in my broken armour. And surely, as they drest me, my spirit to hear the sorrow and sympathy of the Multitudes, and did know that they went downward by millions, unto the Country of Silence. And lo! in that moment when I

near to be in mine armour, I to mind sudden again that I never to have waked to discover Mine Own Maid kissing me in my sleep. And the Pain gat me in the breast, so that I had surely ended then, but that the Master Doctor set somewhat to my breath, that eased me, and gave something of dullness unto my senses for a while.

And I did be carried then in a sling unto the Great Lift, and there did be a bed in the lift, and the Doctor to have me to lie upon the bed; and I to know that he also to know that I never to need a bed any more; neither should I ever to come upward again in the Lift.

And truly the Mighty Pyramid did be an emptyness; for there did seem to be left only the Stress Masters that did arrange the moving of the Millions. And the Stress Masters did stand about the Lift, as we dropt downward through the great miles unto the Underground Fields.

And we came downward in the last unto the Country of Silence, which did lie an hundred miles deep in the world, and did be an hundred miles every way of Silence unto the Dead.

And they that were with me, gat me from the Lift, and did mean to carry me in the sling unto The Last Road. But I stood upon my feet, and made that I should walk, and I held out mine hand for the Diskos, which one did carry. And the Master Doctor signed that they should obey me, as my spirit to know. And I walkt very steadfast down the Way that did lead unto The Last Road; and the Master Doctor walkt behind me, a little space off. And surely, there did be all the Peoples of the World in that great Country; and the Peoples did be spread out forever, so far as my seeing did go; and they to have sight of me; and all the aether did be stirred with the humanness of their sorrow and their kind sympathy. And there grew a murmur, which did be like to a low rolling thunder, and did be the voices of the Peoples. And the rolling of that great husht Sound went to and fro across that mighty Country of Quiet; and there to be afterward an utter silence.

And I saw below me the place of the Last Rest, where did be the beginning of The Last Road; and there did lie there a little figure, covered with a white robe, that did glimmer with the beauteous work of women that had stitcht love and honour into that Last Garment. And surely, I to rock upon my feet, and to steady myself with the Diskos; and the Master Doctor to be unto my side in a moment, and gave me again something that I breathe-in. But, indeed, I to refuse, after that I had taken one breath of the drug; for I

to be able to bear my pain the little time that I now to have to live; and I to mean that I have no dimness of my senses for those short minutes that I should have yet near unto Mine Own. And truly the Master Doctor did not press me anywise, but had a perfect understanding, and went quiet again to my rearward.

And I came soon to that place where Mine Own Dead One did lie; and the Master Monstruwacan stood to her feet, and did be clothed in grey armour, and had the Diskos reversed; and this to be for an Honour unto My Dead Maid. And there kneeled two maids in white, one to the right and one to the left of Mine Own, and they to be for Faithfulness, and did be maids, because that they watched by a maid; and had likewise been matrons, if that the Dead had been wife unto any. And the place at the Head of the Last Rest did be empty, and did be for me; and he that stood to the head, did be for Love; for it did be the chief, and did hold dominion over and did make to live both Faithfulness and Honour. And this to be the way of the Burial alway.

And lo! I took my courage into my heart; and I stood to the head of Mine Own Maid; and I lookt down upon the wondrous white glory of the garment, which did be white because that Mine Own did be a Maid; yet did be worked with yellow Flowers of Weeping, as we did call them, because that she had died in love. And I to know that no hand had toucht that wonderful garment, save the hands of maidens.

And behold! as I stood there, from far away over the Land, there did come a far and faint sound; and the sound did come more nigh, so that I knew that afar off, beyond the Hills of the Babes, the Millions did begin to sing the Calling Song, where Million did call husht unto Million, and the sound did come onward toward where we did be, and did go over us, and pass onward in a husht and wondrous breathing of sound, as that all the Love that did be ever in this world, did call in a low anguish unto a lost Beloved. And the sound to pass away and away over that mighty Country in the deep world, and did hush and hush unto a great and utter silence, save for faint murmur of countless women weeping, that did be in the air of that Land of Quiet.

And there to be a space of silence, and again the silence to be broke by a far sound; and there to come again from beyond the far Hills of the Babes a strange and low sound, and did be as of a wind wandering through damp forests. And the sound grew, and came across the Hills of the Babes, and

did be breathed forth by Million after Million, so that in a little I to hear the Song of Weeping sung very low and sorrowful by the multitudes. And the Song came onward over all that great Country, and past over us, and went onward into the far Land beyond the Dome, and did be caught by the voices of Millions that did be hid in great distances, and so to go onward forever, and to die at last unto a mighty silence.

And the Master Monstruwacan lookt at me from the feet of Mine Own Maid, and I to know that the moment did be come when I to part from the maid Naani forever and forever, even though I to live in some strange future, and to find her soul in some other sweet child. And I stoopt and laid the Diskos beside Mine Own Maid there upon the Last Rest; and the two maids drew back the light wonder of the Garment, and showed me the face of Mine Own, and she to sleep there forever so sweet and husht as a child, and as oft I to have seen her to sleep. And I lookt a little while, and the pain of mine heart did be sufficient, so that I knew I died as I lookt. And once more I lookt, and I set my soul about Mine Own. And I fought with myself, and stood upward, and the maids did cover the face of Mine Own Maid.

And the Master Monstruwacan commended Naani unto Eternity. And he raised the Diskos reversed; and lo! the Road did begin to move upward unto the Dome, and Mine Own Maid did be upon the Road; and I to fight that I keep breathing; so that I not to die before she be lost utter to my sight.

And there did rise now a sound from all that Country that had no order in it; and did be like to a low moaning that did fill all the air of the Land; and there to be also a constant sound, as of a little whistling dree wind that did be in all that Country of Quiet; and truly this to be more than any singing; for it to be the true weeping of multitudes, that did sorrow from the heart, with the grief of this thing that did be.

And I stood utter still, and did draw my breath very even, and lookt unto that small form that did be now afar off where it did lie upon the moving Roadway. And I gazed, as that my soul and all my being did have no power else, even as a man that dies, doth set all his power to a last movement. And I not to wot that the Master Monstruwacan and the two maids did hold me up, because they to perceive that I did be dying; for I only to see Mine Own Little One lying afar off upon the moving of the Last Road.

And the maid in that moment to come to the place where the Road did pass into the strange and luminous vapour of the Earth Current, which did lie all about the base of the Dome; and the vapour to be only as a faint shining smoke, scarce seen, yet to be enough to give something of uncertainty to the Dead, when that they did have past inward of it.

And I stared, with all that did be left of my strength; for Mine Own to be gone utter and forever in but a little minute. And the uncertainty of the luminous vapour did cling about her, and to make her to seem unreal to my gaze; for the vapour did be in constant movement, and to give a seeming of shifting to and fro of all that did be in it.

And behold! as I did stare, with my dreadful pain, there did be sudden a strange hoarse noise from the nearer Millions. And lo! in an instant there came a mighty SHOUT out of all that Country; and the shout did be made again, and did grow into a mighty hoarse roaring from the Millions, so that all that great Country did be filled with the monstrous sound. And, in verity, I to have seen the thing likewise; but to have set it to the madness of longing of mine heart and to that desperate and dreadful pain which did make me to be crazed and lost from all sane thinking.

And the thing that I did see, had been that the Maid did seem to move there upon The Last Road, where she did lie; but indeed, this to have appeared only to be the stirring of the luminous vapor of the Earth Current, which did seem to make things shift, as I have told.

And lo! I now to see truly again that the Maid did move where she laid afar off upon the Road; and I now to know, and to believe that she did indeed live. And my life came into me within a bounding; yet did mine heart seem to be a moment stilled in my breast. And the Master Monstruwacan to have signed already that the Roadway be stopt, and brought backward; but I to be now upon the Last Road, and did run as a madman, shouting vainly upon the name of Mine Own. And I to learn afterward that there to have been a dreadful peril that all the near Millions to rush toward the Last Road, and so, mayhap, to have caused the death of many, and to have been like to have crusht Mine Own. But this danger to have been eased, because that the Watch Master did act very prompt, and set the great regiments of his men to keep back the Millions, and did send a signal abroad over all the Country, that there to be calmness, for that the Maid should be succoured. And alway, whilst this to be, I did run staggering most strangely upward of the Last Road; and surely that great

roof did ring and boom with the constant and mighty shoutings of the Millions.

And there did run others also along the Road, to my back; but I to have been the first, and to make a good speed, though I did stagger and rock so strange upon my feet; and the Road always to be moving backward under me; and so I to be come wonderful soon unto where the Maid did be. And she to be upon her back, and to have pusht the Garment from her face, and did be lying with her eyes open, and a look of gentle wonderment upon her dear face. And she then to see me, and her eyes did smile at me, very glad and quiet; for there to be yet an utter weakness upon her.

And lo! I came with a falling beside her, and I gat upon my knees and upon mine hands, and mine heart did shake my lips to dry whisperings. And she to look weak and steadfast unto me, and I to look forever at her; and I did always try to say things unto her; but my mouth to refuse me.

And understanding did come into her, as a light; and she to know that instant that she to be truly come into the Mighty Pyramid, and I to have gat her there somewise; and she to wake sudden in her body, and set her hands forth all a-trembling from the garment, and in dreadful trouble. And I to see then that the blood did go from me, constant; and the Maid to have perceived this thing, so that she was waked the more proper in a moment from her death-swoon. And surely, I did bleed very dreadful; for all my wounds did be opened with my running. And I to have sudden power with my lips, and did say unto her, very simple, that I loved her. And she to be all in an haze from me; and I to know that she to have come likewise unto her knees, and did have mine head upon her breast; and there to be an utter shaking of the air with some great sound, and a mighty spiritual stirring of the aether of the world. And there to be then the voice of the Master Monstruwacan very dull in mine ears; and the low voice of the Master Doctor; but I never to hear what they did be saying; and did know only that Mine Own Maid did live; and I not to mean to die, but to fight unto living. And even whilst that I made this resolving, I was gone into an utter blackness.

The Love Days

Now, when that I gat back unto life, I to know that I went upward in the Lift, and did be upon that same bed, where I to think I never to need a bed any more, neither to come upward again from out of the Country of Silence.

And I to know vague and strange, that there rose up from out of the mighty depths of the world, the deep thunder of the Underground Organs, and did sound as that they made a strange and utter distant music beyond death; and there to go alway a rolling chaunting, as that multitudes did sing beyond far mountains, and the sound to be somewhiles as a far-blowing wind low in the deep; and again to come clear and to be that great olden melody of the Song of Honour. And I knew, as in a dream, that the Millions in that deep Country made an Honour and a Rejoicing over this Wonder of Joy which did be come. But yet all to be faint and half hid from me, and mine eyes to be as that they had no power to open, and I to seem to be lifting alway upon strange waters of unrealness. And there to be sweet and lovely odours, and these to be of reality, and to come from the great Fields, where the flowers did alway to grow about the passage ways of the Lifts; for the Lift even then to be going upward through the great miles.

And mayhap I moved a little; for there came the voice of the Master Doctor low and gentle to me; and bid me rest; for that all did be well with the Maid. And surely, afterward, I did be gone into an haze, and there to be then a seeming of days in which I half to live and half to sleep, and to wonder without trouble whether I did be dead.

And then there to come days when I lay very quiet, and had no thought of aught; and the Master Doctor oft to bend over me in this hour and that hour, and to look keen into my face. And in the end, after strange spaces, there bent over me another, and there lookt down upon me the dear and lovely face of Mine Own, and the eyes did speak love into my soul; yet did she be calm and husht. And I to begin again to live in my body; and I made, mayhap, a little fumbling with mine hands; for she to take and to hold them; and life to come from her to me; and she to be ever wordless and gentle; and contentment to grow in me, and presently a natural slumber.

And there came a day when I did be let rise, and they that tended me, carried me to one of the Quiet Gardens of the Pyramid; and they set me

there, and they did seem to leave me alone. And there came One then around a bush, and lookt at me a moment, as with an half shyness; only that the love that did shine in her eyes, made the shyness to be a little thing. And, truly, I knew that it did be Mine Own Maid; but I never before to have seen Naani drest pretty as a maid. And I lookt to her, and knew that she did be more dainty than even I to have known. And sudden I made that I rise to come unto her; but she to run quick to me, that she stop me of this natural foolishness; and she then to sit beside me, and to take mine head against her breast, and she not to deny me her lips; but to both a maid and a mother to me in the same moment.

And afterward, she had me to be very still; and we to sit there in an utter dumb happiness, until they that did attend me, were come again. And the Master of the Doctors did be with them, and I to see that there went something of satisfaction in his face.

And after that day I saw Mine Own Maid every day; and I gat better unto health with a wondrous quickness; for Love did mend me. And soon I did be let go downward unto the Fields; but yet to go by private ways, because that the Multitudes should be like to follow me alway; and I to need to be quiet.

And the Maid to be with me; for the Master Monstruwacan and the Master of the Doctors did agree upon this matter, and had an Officer of Marriage to wed us; and we to be married very quiet and simple; for I yet to be over-weak for the Public Marriage, which we to have later; when, truly, the Millions made us a Guard of Honor eight miles high, from the top unto the bottom of Mighty Pyramid. But this to have been later, as I do tell, and did be a Ceremonial of the Peoples, because that they not to be denied that they give me an Honour.

And surely the Maid to be with me alway, and did be now my wife, and my strength to come alway upon me, and Mine Own to grow again unto a perfect health. And, in verity, we did be now in the Love Days which do be the most beauteous if that the Love to be True.

And we did wander through the mighty Fields at our will, and walkt in the Love Paths of the Fields, which did be alway anear to those places where did be the villages. And I to hide our name, lest we to be beset by any, out of natural curiousness and kindliness; for we to need to be utter together and quiet. And we to chose those places for our slumber where beauty of

flowers did be most wondrous; and we to carry somewhat of food with us; but also to eat when we came unto the villages which did be here and there in the Fields, which were truly so huge as Countries. And Mine Own did make good her promise an hundred times, as you shall say, and did prepare me a great and hearty meal; and did tease me utter, that I be a glutton, as I did eat, and kist me lest that I have ever a chance to say aught in mine own defense. And truly, she did be all that mine heart and my spirit did desire; and she to have companioned me with Love, and to have entered my spirit into Joy.

And once we to go downward unto the Country of Silence; but not to stay very long at that time, because that my Memory did return upon me. Yet in the after time, we to wander there oft with Memory, and Holiness of great Thinkings, and with Love which doth hold all. And as we to leave that Country, I to tell Mine Own how that when she had been suspend of her life by the Horrid Force of the House, I to have minded me with a dreadful pain that I never to have waked to discover her kissing me when that I did sleep. And surely Mine Own Dear One did blush most lovely, and had never known that I did be aware of her sweet naughtiness; and she then to have all thought for mine agony, when that she did be dead, ere the Vapour of life of the Earth-Force did set her spirit free of the Silence. And she to come unto me, and set her arms about me in utter love and dear understanding.

And she then to tell me that the Doctors to say that she had been, as it were, stunned and froze of the Spirit, and all her Being and Life suspend; and the great life-force of the Earth-Current to have waked her spirit, and her body then to live and her blood to flow proper again. And the Doctors had talkt much and searched much of late in the olden Records of their Work; and they to have found somewhat of one such happening in the olden time; but truly, naught such to have been ever through a mighty age of years.

And whilst that we to wander and to rest in the Fields, I oft to tell Mine Own of this matter and that matter; and I to know that she had learned somewhat of odd things, ere I did be come to health; but not overmuch; for she also to have been utter alack, as you shall think; and to have come from her bed, when that I did lie so still, for the Master Doctor to have ordained this, because he to fear that I to be going truly to die, if that he not to do somewhat to awaken my spirit. And in verity, you shall think

upon the deepness of my love, as I to know that she did have held mine hands so brave and gentle, whilst that she to have scarce power to her feet. And I to say a little holy praise of Mine Own; and did have her loving unto mine arms, that I hold her to me.

And so do I come to mine ending; and have but one more thing that I tell. And this to happen a while later; after that Mine Own and I had gone through the second marriage which did be the Public Marriage. For it did be, that one day My Wife, that did be Mine Own, did take me with a sweet cunning unto the Hall of Honour. And surely, when I was come there, I to see that many of the Peoples did be in that great Hall, and did stand about in a silence; yet as that they had no meaning to do aught; but yet to be that they did wait upon somewhat.

And My Wife did go forward with me unto the centre place of the Hall; and sudden I saw why that she did bring me so cunning sweet; for there did stand in the midst of the Hall of Honour, in the Place of Honour, a Statue of a man in broken armour, that did carry a maid forever.

And I did be dumb; and how of this Age shall you to know the Honour that this to mean in that; for it did be an Honour that was given only to the Great Dead; and I to be but a young man, and did be so utter far off from greatness; save that I to love with all mine heart and with all my spirit, and therefore death to be but a little thing before love. And you to know how Love doth make sweet and brave the heart; and to have understanding with me in mine humbleness and my wonder and my natural pride that there did any so think to honour me. And Mine Own did be weeping with joy and honest pride of her Man, beside me. And there to be an utter silence of dear sympathy in all the great Hall of Honour. And they that did be there, to let me go in quietness, with Mine Own, which did be a lovely thing of understanding.

And I to go loving and thoughtful with Mine Own Wife; and she to be very nigh to me. And I to have gained honour; yet to have learned that Honour doth be but as the ash of Life, if that you not to have Love. And I to have Love. And to have Love is to have all; for that which doth be truly LOVE doth mother Honour and Faithfulness; and they three to build the House of Joy.

1 A reference by “X” to his loss. — Ed.

2 There follow many pages of obliterated MS.; but here and there a legible line or word has pointed the way, and I gather that X., in his Dream, has got into communication with the Lesser Redoubt, and had speech through the night of the world with a maid named Naani, whom he believes to be the olden Mirdath. Disaster comes upon the Lesser Redoubt, in the form of an attack by monsters and by the failure of their Life Current. The communications come to an end, leaving all the people of the Great Redoubt full of sympathy and horror. One night certain youths of the Great Redoubt steal out into the Night Land, to attempt to find and rescue the other Humans and Naani; but fail, and some are brought back dead to the Pyramid by a number of men who go out to their rescue, many of whom get killed by a terrible attack from the Night Hounds. Follows the gigantic burial scene, almost intact. — Ed.

3 Evidently X, in his Dream, has now ventured out alone into the Night Land; presumably, from sense of mutilated contest, in search for the Lesser Pyramid, and to rescue Naani. — Ed.

4 Here we have X in a great Gorge, further upon his journey. Evidently the Master Word is a sign sent through the aether by Naani. — Ed.

THE DREAM OF X
by William Hope Hodgson
Illustrated by Stephen E. Fabian

First published in this form, 1977, in an edition of 2500 copies. This book was set in 14 point Baskerville in our facility on the AlphaComp, a direct input typesetter, and printed by Bradford and Bigelow Inc., Danvers, Massachusetts. Paper is 80# Monadnock Caress, manufactured by the Monadnock Paper Mills, Inc., Bennington, New Hampshire. Bound by Haddon Craftsmen, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

$20.00

THE LAST CELT
A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY OF
ROBERT E. HOWARD

by Glenn Lord

Forty years after his untimely death at the age of thirty, Texan Robert E. Howard has become one of the most striking figures in American fiction, with a popularity that overflows onto other continents.

THE LAST CELT has been compiled by another Texan, Glenn Lord, whose patience and quiet perseverance have established him as the foremost student and scholar of Howardiana. His researches are the amazing product of many years of digging and digesting, of interpreting and compiling, and this volume is destined to become an invaluable reference tool for the Howard enthusiast for years to come, as well as a fascinating experience for the more casual reader.

Mr. Lord has divided THE LAST CELT into four major sections: Autobiography, Biography, Bibliography, and Miscellanea. The Autobiography provides several pieces, written over a lapse of years, ranging from "The Wandering Years," primarily a family history, to the

marvelously revealing, "On Reading and Writing," with its final entry made but a short month before Howard's death.

The Biography section is represented with articles by Alvin Earl Perry, H. P. Lovecraft, Glenn Lord, E. Hoffmann Price and by Harold Preece. The extensive Bibliography contains sub-sections on books, fiction, verse, articles, letters, index by periodicals, unpublished fiction and verse, translations, etc.

The Miscellanea section is just that. It includes reproductions of letters and manuscripts, amateur journals, story plots, maps, a "Robert E. Howard Photograph Album," and reproduction of magazine covers. Among the latter are all of the Weird Tales issues that featured a cover painting for a Howard story. And, by way of conclusion, there are funeral notices recording the final act in Robert E. Howard's brilliant, if short-lived, career.

Dust wrapper by Marcus Boas.

DONALD M. GRANT, PUBLISHER
WEST KINGSTON, RHODE ISLAND

THE DREAM OF X
by William Hope Hodgson

...a most remarkable book that has rested dark and forboding since the year 1912....a book of the far future in which mankind is subject to the most terrifying siege of other dimensional malignities....a book of frightening concepts....

Captured In Illustration
by STEPHEN E. FABIAN